

Acquisition in Interlanguage Pragmatics

Anne Barron

Acquisition in Interlanguage Pragmatics

Pragmatics & Beyond New Series

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Volume 108

Acquisition in Interlanguage Pragmatics: Learning how to do things with words
in a study abroad context

by Anne Barron

Acquisition in Interlanguage Pragmatics

Learning how to do things with words
in a study abroad context

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John Benjamins Publishing Company
Amsterdam/Philadelphia



™ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences – Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Barron, Anne.

Acquisition in interlanguage pragmatics : learning how to do things with words in a study abroad context / Anne Barron.

p. cm. (Pragmatics & Beyond, New Series, ISSN 0922-842X ; v. 108)

Thesis (doctoral)—Universität Hamburg, 2001.

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

1. Second language acquisition. 2. Pragmatics. 3. Interlanguage (Language learning)

I. Title. II. Series.

P118.2. B37 2002

418'0071-dc21

2002034192

ISBN 90 272 5350 1 (Eur.) / 1 58811 342 6 (US) (Hb; alk. paper)

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John Benjamins Publishing Co. · P.O. Box 36224 · 1020 ME Amsterdam · The Netherlands
John Benjamins North America · P.O. Box 27519 · Philadelphia PA 19118-0519 · USA

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Abbreviations

C	Contra	L(1)	Present learner data prior to the year abroad
CCSARP	Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project.	L(2)	Present learner data after two months in the target speech community
CI	Conventionally Indirect Head Act Strategy(ies)	L(3)	Present learner data at the end of the year abroad
D	Social Distance	L1	Native Language
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)	L2	Target Language
DCT	Discourse Completion Task	MCQ	Multiple Choice Questionnaire(s)
EFL	English as a Foreign Language	NNS	Non-Native Speaker(s)
ESL	English as a Second Language	NS	Native Speaker(s)
FDCT	Free Discourse Completion Task	P	Relative Power
FL	Foreign Language	PAD	Pädagogischer Austauschdienst (Language Assistant Scheme)
FTA	Face Threatening Act	PQ	Production Questionnaire
H	Hearer	R	Absolute Rank of Imposition
I	Initiate	S	Speaker
IL	Interlanguage	Sa	Satisfy
ILP	Interlanguage Pragmatics	SDn	Syntactic Downgrader(s)
IrEng NS	Native Speakers of Irish English	SL	Second Language
L&PD	Lexical and phrasal downgrader(s)	SLA	Second Language Acquisition
		TAP	Think Aloud Protocol

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank a number of people for their support along the difficult and winding road that is a PhD thesis. First and foremost, I wish to thank Professor Klaus Peter Schneider, who supervised my thesis from its beginnings in Dublin until bureaucracy in Bonn got in the way and who has supported and encouraged me generously throughout the writing of this book — “thanking you!” Also, a very special thanks to Professor Juliane House, my supervisor in the final stages of the project.

This study would not have been possible without the 1997–1998 year abroad students from the Department of German in University College Dublin. For reasons of confidentiality, I will not name them individually but I would like to thank them all for their outstanding co-operation and good humour during the data collection process. Also, to all the German and English native speakers whom I have plagued at various stages of the research project, my sincere thanks. Of these, I would like to especially mention: Eva Bodinet, Britta Bücher, Burkhard Eltester, Joybrato Mukherjee, Carol Mulhall, Karen Ottewell, Klaus Walraf, Petra Walther and Sigrid Zimmerling. Thanks also goes to those colleagues who allowed me to involve their students in the data collection process, and also to the university computer departments in Bonn, Dublin and Hamburg and to those individuals I consulted on statistical questions.

To the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst I would like to express my gratitude for financially supporting the research project.

I would also like to thank all my friends for their interest and understanding along the road, particularly in the final stages. And last, but by no means least, a very big thanks to my parents and sister, Hilda, for always being behind me in what I choose to do and for talking sense in times of need. All that is missing now is the red coat! Hope you have it ready, Hilda!

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

That speech communities differ in their use of language is now a well-established fact. Research has shown, for example, that Americans tend to sacrifice honesty and straightforwardness in an effort to protect their interactant from being offended whereas to Germans, honesty is a sign of friendship. Lying to avoid telling someone an unwelcome truth is consequently not highly valued in German society (cf. Kotthoff 1989: 451f). While such cultural variety may serve as an interesting topic of investigation for researchers, there is no doubt that in everyday life, culture can basically get in the way. Indeed, memories of refusing offers of coffee on several occasions on my first stay in Germany many years ago remain with me to this day. Why you may ask? The reason is simply that I, a foreign language learner of German, refused such offers without knowing that I had actually refused them! Upon an offer of coffee, I, at that time, automatically said, “No, I’m fine” — not because I did not want the coffee — quite the contrary in fact! I said I was fine because that is what we conventionally do in my home country, Ireland. I, of course, fully expected to be asked a second time, was I sure I would not like a cup. Upon such a reoffer, I would, naturally, have graciously said, okay, so, just the one! On a later visit to Germany, I also distinctly remember often feeling very foolish and also annoyed at German native speakers’ reactions to my innocent polite question, “*Bist Du sicher?*” (Are you sure?), in response to their refusing an offer of coffee which I had made. I was quickly told on several occasions that yes, they were sure — had they not just said no! They, on the other hand, probably felt insulted that I did not seem to believe that they had meant what they had said. Such tales of some of my first lasting memories of life in Germany often cause laughter among Germans and Irish alike. However, at the time I found such experiences far from amusing. On the contrary, I was quite amazed at the differences I found and at first thought the people in question to be rather strange and impolite, such issues never having been addressed in the foreign language context in which I learned German.

Similar anecdotes of intercultural misunderstandings abound, of course, and are mostly interpreted as instances of impoliteness by the interactants involved.¹ On top of such cross-cultural differences, learner-specific features also influence native/non-native communication. In other words, since learners are learners, and, therefore, do not have native speaker control over all features of the target language (L2), they may, at a certain point in time, not master particular features of their

second language which play a role in polite communication. The use of routines is a case in point (cf. e.g. Bahns et al. 1986 on routines).

While all learners are open to potential misunderstanding, advanced learners are actually more at risk than lower proficiency learners since for these learners grammatical proficiency is no longer seen as an excuse for impoliteness. This was illustrated, for example, in a study by Enomoto/Marriott (1994:155) in which six Japanese native speakers (NS) were asked to assess two Australian tour-guides' pragmatic competence in Japanese. It was found that the native speaker judges were more critical of the advanced speakers' level of politeness than of that of the lower proficiency speakers.² In other words, it appears that when grammatical competence is not seen as a relevant explanation, native speakers generally attribute any deviations from conventional usage to personality issues rather than to issues of language use.

And what do foreign language learners know of issues of language use? Very little it seems. Bardovi-Harlig/Dörnyei (1998) in a study in which the grammatical and pragmatic awareness of learners and teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) were compared, illustrated that pragmatic aspects are rarely addressed in foreign language classes (cf. also House 1997b:81). This, Thomas (1983:97) suggests, can be traced to two main reasons. The first concerns the fact that relevant precise descriptions of the pragmatics of different languages are not as readily available to language teachers as, for example, descriptions of grammatical phenomena due to a lack of research in the area. Indeed, despite the passage of time, this remark is still valid today despite a recent increase in such research (cf. Judd 1999). The second reason relates to the fact that it may be relatively difficult to teach particular aspects of pragmatic competence. This, Thomas proposes, is primarily due to the fact that sociopragmatic competence, a sub-component of pragmatic competence, is concerned with the interface of linguistic action and social structure. It is thus intertwined with learners' social judgements, and consequently sensitive to correction. A further reason relating to the lack of concern with pragmatic issues in the foreign language classroom is that research on the teaching of L2 pragmatic competence is still rather in its infancy (cf. Kasper 2000c:383, Tateyama et al. 1997:163). Its teaching is therefore not well established in foreign language curricula, despite some recent attempts to redress this research imbalance (cf. Kasper 2000c, 2001, Rose/Kasper 2001).

In the light of such lack of attention to pragmatic issues in the foreign language classroom, it appears that time spent in the target speech community remains a primary opportunity for language learners to acquire L2 pragmatic competence due to the accessibility of authentic pragmatic input in the target speech community and to the potentially extensive opportunities for use of the target language. However, the question, as to what extent students' pragmatic competence develops over a period in the target country, i.e., to what extent they become "more L2-like"

in their use of the target language, remains as yet largely unanswered, as does the question as to the path any such development may take.

Since its conception in the early 1980s, the field of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), a discipline concerned with "...the study of nonnative speakers' use and acquisition of L2 pragmatic knowledge..." (Kasper/Rose 1999:81) and, therefore, also with questions of development, has concentrated predominantly on learners' use of pragmatic knowledge to the detriment of questions of development. The fruit of this concentration is a substantial body of research on interlanguage realisations of various speech acts. Cross-sectional and longitudinal studies with a focus on developmental issues remain, however, in short supply. As a result, information concerning the development of L2 pragmatic competence is rather sparse. Indeed, this situation can be said to be particularly extreme in the case of German as a foreign/second language. Consequently, interlanguage pragmatics can be, and indeed has been, accused of neglecting one of its principal goals, i.e., research into development issues. In so doing it has essentially disowned its origins in second language acquisition (SLA) (cf. Kasper/Rose 1999:81).

Research on study abroad, a "...special case of second language acquisition..." (Freed 1995b:4), is equally unenlightening as regards the effect of the year abroad on the development of L2 pragmatic competence. Indeed, even in the context of a widespread belief and deep intuition that study abroad results in overall gains in language acquisition, it is only very recently that the level of research interest into the effects of study abroad has increased somewhat — despite the increasing importance of this aspect of second language acquisition in the current international climate and in the light of the growth of the European Union. As Meara (1994:32) comments: "Despite the huge amount of resources that the year abroad uses up, there is not a great deal of research on how effective it really is". This lack of research relates in particular to the development of pragmatic competence during a period of study abroad.

The present study reports on an investigation designed to, in some way, meet this obvious need for acquisitional research in L2 pragmatics — in particular in the form of longitudinal studies — and also to meet the need for research into the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence in German. Specifically, it concerns a longitudinal study in which the development of the L2 pragmatic competence of a group of thirty-three Irish learners of German is investigated over ten months (termed "a year abroad") spent studying in the target speech community, Germany. The study is anchored in the field of interlanguage pragmatics, and the approach taken is speech-act based — interest focusing on productions of requests, offers and refusals of offers. The study also draws on research from discourse analysis in the investigation of offer-refusal of offer exchanges.

The objective of this study is to record any developments — whether towards or away from the L2 norm — in the L2 pragmatic competence of the current group

of learners over time spent in the target speech community. The specific research questions — rather than hypotheses given the exploratory nature of the study — which guided the investigation can be formulated as follows:

1. Is there evidence of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the target speech community?
2. Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?
3. What implications do any changes or lack of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence have for our understanding of the development of L2 pragmatic competence?
4. Can one speak of stages of acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence?

In an effort to answer these questions, both production data and metapragmatic data were elicited.

Apart from contributing to our current understanding of pragmatic development in interlanguage in general and, thus, strengthening the relationship between interlanguage pragmatics and second language acquisition, this study is particularly relevant for policy decisions concerning the year abroad, and also with regard to considerations regarding the preparation of students for a year abroad. Furthermore, the lack of research into learner development issues in German pragmatics suggests that this study also has implications for the teaching of German since it highlights specific difficulties which students may experience in the development of L2 pragmatic competence.

The present report is divided into six chapters, structured as follows: The theoretical underpinnings of the study are outlined in chapters two and three — two chapters due to the two parent disciplines of interlanguage pragmatics. In chapter two emphasis is on interlanguage pragmatic issues relating to the field of pragmatics. Here the foundations and key concepts of the framework of analysis — speech act theory and discourse analysis — are presented, and the concept of “pragmatic competence” is clarified. Chapter three turns to issues of pragmatic transfer and acquisition, issues which relate interlanguage pragmatics to the field of second language acquisition. The longitudinal and cross-sectional studies conducted to date in interlanguage pragmatics guide this overview. In this same chapter, what is known of the importance of input in second language pragmatics is discussed, and in this regard, existing year-abroad studies also reviewed. The theoretical background established, focus then shifts to the present longitudinal empirical study in chapter four. This chapter includes a detailed description of the research design — encompassing methodological issues, choice of informants and selection of speech acts. A description of the three speech acts chosen is also included and finally the parameters selected for the analysis are addressed. Chapter five presents an analysis of differences found between the speech act realisations and discourse structure of the present Irish learners of German prior to the year abroad

and those of the German native speaker informants in the study. Following this initial analysis, developments with time spent in the target speech community are investigated and discussed. In chapter six, the major findings are summarised and the contribution which the study makes to interlanguage pragmatics and year abroad research is highlighted. Limitations of the study are also discussed and the practical implications of the investigation are outlined. The study concludes with suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 2

A pragmatic approach

The field of pragmatics, although a recent development in linguistics, is one which has spawned a number of research areas. Apart from interlanguage pragmatics, both contrastive pragmatics and cross-cultural pragmatics are of special interest for the present study. This section begins with a brief characterisation of pragmatics and with a discussion of what is understood by pragmatic competence — the central focus of the present study. Following this step, theories of importance in the investigation of pragmatic competence are introduced and insights from discourse analysis are also considered. The outline of contrastive and cross-cultural pragmatics then presented provides a framework for the examination of some of the primary research questions and concepts at the core of interlanguage pragmatics — and indeed this study. Finally, the area of interlanguage pragmatics itself is characterised.

2.1 Pragmatics — The broad picture

Since the philosopher, Charles Morris, introduced the modern concept of pragmatics in 1938 (cf. Morris 1964), an array of definitions of this research area have been put forward.¹ However, as yet, there exists no consensus as to a definition despite lengthy discussions of the issue. For the purpose of the present study, I will take as a working definition of pragmatics that proposed by Crystal (1985: 240). He defines pragmatics as:

... the study of LANGUAGE from the point of view of the users, especially of the choices they make, the CONSTRAINTS they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on the other participants in an act of communication. (original emphasis)

The reference to “choices” and “constraints” in this definition reflects an important differentiation suggested by Leech (1983) and his colleague, Thomas (1983:99). These researchers identify a sociopragmatic and a pragmalinguistic component of pragmatics. Pragmalinguistics refers to the linguistic side of pragmatics, encompassing “... the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions” (Leech 1983:11). In other words, it refers to the range of resources from which speakers of a language have to choose when using that

language. Such resources include pragmatic strategies (e.g., directness and indirectness), pragmatic routines and modification devices. Sociopragmatics, on the other hand, is the “...sociological interface of pragmatics” (Leech 1983:10). It is concerned with the interface of linguistic action and social structure. Specifically, it addresses the effect of such constraints as social status, social distance and degree of imposition on the choice of linguistic realisation of a particular illocution.

Finally, it should be noted that two broad areas of pragmatics are distinguished in the literature, namely micropragmatics and macropragmatics. While micropragmatics includes the study of such areas in pragmatics as reference, implicature and speech acts, macropragmatics involves discourse analysis and metapragmatics (cf. Mey 1993, Schneider *in press*). Both perspectives are addressed in the present study — although the main focus is speech act-based, and thus micro-pragmatic.

2.2 Pragmatic competence

The purpose of the present study, i.e., to investigate the effect of a stay in the target speech community on the development of L2 pragmatic competence, demands a definition of the term “pragmatic competence” in order to facilitate the selection of suitable indicants although it is clear that no indicant can ever replicate or completely exhaust the meaning of this broad concept (cf. Zeller 1988:322ff). Since it was the growth in interest in communicative competence which eventually triggered research into pragmatic competence in the first place, it is necessary first to turn briefly to the broader notion of communicative competence, of which pragmatic competence is a sub-concept.

2.2.1 Communicative competence

The concept of communicative competence, first introduced by the anthropologist and sociolinguist, Hymes, in 1964, and defined in Hymes (1972), was born out of a reaction against Chomsky’s (1965) notion of competence which encompassed knowledge of the rules of grammar alone and disregarded contextual appropriateness. In contrast to this narrow concept, communicative competence consists of grammatical competence and knowledge of the sociocultural rules of appropriate language use. Unlike Chomsky’s, Hymes’ concept of competence not only includes knowledge, but also the ability to use this underlying knowledge (Hymes 1972:283).

Hymes’ research typified the shift in the study of language at that time from an interest in the language system in isolation to the study of language in use. This trend was continued by such researchers as Bachman (1990), Bachman/Palmer (1996), Canale (1983) and Canale/Swain (1980), who further developed Hymes’ (1972) theoretical concept of communicative concept, into which is embedded the

concept of pragmatic competence, and indeed also discourse competence.²

Canale (1983), in a modified version of Canale/Swain (1980), proposes a four-part theoretical framework of communicative competence. Here communicative competence consists of grammatical competence (i.e., mastery of vocabulary, word formation, sentence formation, semantics, phonology), sociolinguistic competence (i.e., choices of language in use), discourse competence (concerning cohesiveness in form, i.e., use of pronouns, ellipsis, etc., and coherence in meaning, i.e., links between literal meanings, communicative functions and attitudes, in both written and spoken texts), and finally also of strategic competence (i.e., communication strategies employed to compensate for gaps in the knowledge system or a lack of fluency, or strategies to enhance the effectiveness of communication, e.g., rhetorical strategies). In this model, a clear distinction is made between communicative competence and actual communication, also termed communicative performance, on the basis that actual communication may not reflect a speaker's communicative competence due to factors, such as fatigue and nervousness (cf. Canale 1983: 5f, Canale/Swain 1980: 6).

Although pragmatic competence is essentially included in this model under sociolinguistic competence, it was not until Bachman (1990) that pragmatic competence came into its own. Bachman's model of communicative language ability is composed of three main elements, namely language competence, strategic competence and physiological mechanisms. Language competence is then, in turn, broken down into two discrete components, namely pragmatic competence and organisational competence. Organisational competence consists of grammatical competence and textual competence (comparable with Canale's 1983 concept of discourse competence). Pragmatic competence, on the other hand, comprises illocutionary competence (termed functional knowledge in Bachman/Palmer 1996: 69) and sociolinguistic competence, where illocutionary competence is conceived as both knowledge of speech acts and also of language functions, and where sociolinguistic competence is concerned with sensitivity to language and context, i.e., with knowledge of the contextual appropriateness of the linguistic forms of realising illocutions. The distinction between illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence is reminiscent of Leech's (1983: 10f) and Thomas' (1983: 99) division of pragmatics into pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. In this model, a clear distinction is made between knowledge and ability. Although the model is one of communicative language *ability*, the language competence component just detailed, of which pragmatic competence is an important part, is concerned only with knowledge. Ability is the concern of the other two components of communicative language ability — namely of strategic competence and psychophysiological mechanisms. While the former component concerns a central ability, i.e., the ability to assess the situation, to plan an utterance verbally and also to perform (i.e., utter) an utterance, the latter refers to such mechanisms as neuromuscular skills which are

essential for performing utterances. The degree to which strategic competence is exploited in actual communication is dependent on contextual factors.

An additional distinction made with regard to pragmatic competence, and reminiscent of Bachman's distinction between pragmatic knowledge and ability, is that made by Faerch/Kasper (1984) between declarative and procedural pragmatic knowledge. Declarative pragmatic knowledge refers to knowledge of pragmatic issues and is reminiscent of the pragmatic knowledge component identified by Bachman (1990). Procedural knowledge, on the other hand, is described in terms of procedures. It:

... selects and combines parts of declarative knowledge for the purpose of reaching specific communicative goals, observing constraints imposed by language processing in real time ... (Faerch/Kasper 1984:215)

It includes goal-formulation and context-analysis, verbal planning and also monitoring execution, i.e., monitoring feedback from the interlocutor. On occasion, stress, pressure, fatigue or complex cognitive content may lead to problems of access during communication — in such situations, speakers may produce a pragmatically inappropriate utterance despite having the relevant declarative knowledge. The problem in such instances lies with speakers' procedural knowledge. Comparing Bachman (1990) with Faerch/Kasper (1984), one can suggest parallels between Faerch/Kasper's concept of procedural knowledge and the strategic competence (which involves ability rather than knowledge) of Bachman's model as both involve context-analysis and verbal planning.

2.2.2 Pragmatic competence — A working definition

Based on the above overview of what pragmatic competence consists of, pragmatic competence, for the purposes of the present study, is understood as knowledge of the linguistic resources available in a given language for realising particular illocutions, knowledge of the sequential aspects of speech acts and finally, knowledge of the appropriate contextual use of the particular languages' linguistic resources.

A number of points are to be mentioned in relation to this definition. Firstly, the speech act plays a central role in the definition given, as is the case in the characterisations discussed above — a focus which also reflects the trend in interlanguage pragmatic studies to date. Similar to Bachman (1990) and Thomas (1983), two central, related, aspects of pragmatic competence are recognised in the realisation of such speech acts — one linguistic (pragmalinguistic aspects), the other social (sociopragmatic).

Secondly, in line with the tradition of speech act theory and interlanguage pragmatics in general, the focus of this investigation is on spoken language and, specifically, on production rather than comprehension.

In addition, the definition put forward sees pragmatic competence as consisting of knowledge components, reflecting Bachman's (1990) and Bachman/Palmer's (1996) distinction between knowledge and ability and Faerch/Kasper's (1984) between declarative and procedural knowledge. Consequently, in order to prevent developments in pragmatic knowledge being concealed from the researcher, it will be endeavoured to diminish the influence of factors such as fatigue, complex interpersonal relationships or indeed cognitive overload as a result of the complexity or spontaneity of a particular situation (an especially relevant fact in a testing situation) — i.e. factors which may negatively influence a particular informant's strategic competence or procedural knowledge, and, thus, his/her "live" realisations. Indeed, this step is particularly important in the case of refusals of offers, one of the speech acts investigated, given that this speech act, filling a non-Initiating move, is cognitively relatively more demanding than those moves which fill Initiates in interactional structure (cf. 3.2.3) — speech act knowledge may, thus, be masked. Issues of developing ability, while also addressed, thus, take a back-seat in the analysis.

Finally, both a macro and micro perspective is taken on pragmatics in the present study, knowledge of sequential aspects of discourse competence also being investigated. Here the concept of discourse competence proposed by both Canale (1983) and Bachman (1990) will be adopted, although cohesion will not be a subject of analysis. A model of discourse developed by Edmondson (1981) will be employed to address aspects of coherence (cf. 2.5.2).

2.3 Speech acts

It was the dawn of speech act theory which triggered the development of the field of pragmatics, where it has remained one of the most influential theories. In the following, this theory is outlined very briefly (2.3.1) and a short overview is given of the application of this theory to empirical research (2.3.2).³

2.3.1 Speech acts — From philosophy to linguistics

It is the British ordinary language philosopher, John Austin, whom we have to thank for speech act theory, a theory which, through the work of John Searle, triggered interest in contextualised utterance meaning in linguistics and, thereby, spawned the field of pragmatics, a fundamental departure from the truth-conditional semantics prevalent at the time.

In a series of lectures given in 1955, and published posthumously in 1962 (cf. Austin 1976), Austin identified that, irrespective of what we say, we are always "doing things with words". In acting with words, Austin maintains that a speaker produces three acts:

- the *locutionary act*, i.e., the act of uttering (phonemes, morphemes, sentences) and also referring to and saying something about the world.
- the *illocutionary act*, i.e., the speaker's (S) intention realised in producing an utterance, e.g., request, compliment.
- the *perlocutionary act*, i.e., the intended effect of an utterance on the hearer (H), e.g., to make H do something, to make H happy.

That is to say that, in producing an utterance, we not only say something about the world (locution), but we also perform an act (illocution) which we intend to have an effect on our interlocutor (perlocution). The illocutionary act is the principal focus of speech act theory and it is, indeed, itself, standardly referred to as the "speech act". In other words, as Searle et al. (1980:vii) phrase it, the central assumption of speech act theory is that:

... the minimal unit of communication is not a sentence or other expression, but rather the performance of certain kinds of acts, such as making statements, asking questions, giving orders, describing, ..., etc.

The illocutionary act signals how a particular proposition is to be interpreted, as one proposition may occur in various illocutionary acts, as in the case of such utterances as "Jane, go to bed", "Jane, will you go to bed?", "Jane will go to bed" — while each of these utterances have the same proposition (i.e., Jane will go to bed), the illocutions differ, representing respectively an order, a question and a predication (cf. Searle et al. 1980:viif). Illocutionary force indicating devices, such as performative verbs, mood, word order, intonation, etc., aid the hearer in assigning illocutionary force to an utterance. In addition, Searle (1969:66f) also proposed that there exist certain conditions, constitutive rules of a speech act, termed felicity conditions, which must be met if an act is to be performed. These, like other types of illocutionary force indicating device, facilitate in identifying the particular speech act in question. Despite these means, however, an illocution is not always felicitous and, likewise, a perlocution not always successful.

The question of how many speech acts, or how many speech act types there are, is one which remains open despite many attempts at classification. Since the first speech act classification was developed by Austin (1976:151ff), numerous alternative classifications have been put forward.⁴ Of these, it is Searle's (1976) classification, although criticised, which is the most widely accepted.⁵ This is, thus, the classification which is briefly detailed in the following. Five classes of speech act are distinguished, namely:

- *Representatives/Assertives*: S commits him/herself to the belief that the propositional content of the utterance is true.
- *Directives*: S attempts to get H to do something.
- *Commissives*: S commits him/herself to a future course of action.

- *Expressives*: S expresses his/her psychological attitude towards some prior action or state of affairs.
- *Declarations*: S brings about a correspondence between the propositional content and the world; institutionally-bound.

Different types of speech acts are also identified on the basis of whether there is a direct or an indirect relationship between their structure and function. While direct speech acts can be defined as acts in which “... the speaker says what he means ...”, indirect speech acts involve acts in which the speaker “... means something more than what he says” (Searle et al. 1980: viii). In the case of an utterance, such as “Can you give me a hand here?”, for example, two speech acts are realised — the direct speech act is a question concerning the hearer’s ability to help; the indirect one a request for help. In some cases, indirect means are, however, employed so frequently that little inferencing is required to establish the underlying intention. Such speech acts are termed conventionally indirect and are to be distinguished from those which require some inferencing, i.e., non-conventionally indirect speech acts (also termed hints).

2.3.2 The speech act in empirical research

The large number of studies conducted in both cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics with the speech act as a unit of analysis is evidence of its usefulness in empirical analysis.⁶ Nonetheless, it is important to keep some of the criticisms levelled at speech act theory in mind. Some of the main points of critique are addressed in the following.

Primarily speaker-oriented:

In speech act theory, the hearer is seen as playing a passive role. The illocutionary force of a particular utterance is determined with regard to the linguistic form of the utterance and also introspection as to whether the necessary felicity conditions — not least in relation to the speaker’s beliefs and feelings — are fulfilled. Interactional aspects are, thus, neglected. However, conversation is not just a mere chain of independent illocutionary forces — rather, speech acts are related to other speech acts within a wider discourse context.⁷ Speech act theory, in that it does not consider the function played by utterances in driving conversation is, therefore, insufficient in accounting for what actually happens in conversation.

Allocation of illocutionary force to utterances:

This is a crucial step in empirical research. However, this may be rather more difficult than suggested by Searle at times. Indeed, in some situations, both the hearer and speaker may react to a particular speech act on a number of levels — in other words, an utterance may have multiple illocutionary points (cf. Labov/Fanshel 1977: 29f). Kasper (1989b: 41f) and Wierzbicka (1991: 199) maintain in this regard, however,

that for the greater majority of utterances, the illocutionary force is unambiguous and, indeed, it must be admitted that we do usually know what a speaker intends to achieve by using a particular utterance. As Wierzbicka (1991: 199) says:

I believe that when we listen to other people we more often than not do know what they are doing, and we know it, to a large extent, due to unmistakable linguistic clues. ... 'Pragmatic' guesses play a part, too, but if we had to rely on guesses, human communication would be much less successful, much less effective than it in fact is.

Furthermore, these latter researchers argue that just as semantic ambiguity does not cause the notion of the lexical item to be overthrown, neither should uncertainty in the assignment of illocutionary force invalidate the notion of the speech act.

A focus on verbal dialogues:

This leads to a lack of concern for paralinguistic and non-verbal aspects of language (cf. Geis 1995: 13ff). This issue is not, however, of relevance in the present study as the data, though taking the spoken form, are written.

Universal presumption:

The claim that the strategies used to perform an indirect speech act are universal given that they are based on universal felicity conditions has been debated in the light of cross-cultural differences found (cf. 2.6.2.2 on this debate).

It may be concluded that the speech act, although not without fault as a conceptual unit, is, by and large, suited to the study of language in use. However, its limitations regarding lack of reference to the wider discourse context must be kept in mind.

2.4 Politeness theories

Different speech communities demonstrate both similarities and differences in using language to establish, maintain and foster interpersonal relations, leading to potential difficulties in interaction between cultures. Since the late 1970s, various politeness theories have been proposed within pragmatics to explain interactional conventions of language use — both universal and culture-specific.⁸ It is these which are addressed in the following, but first let us turn to the term “politeness” itself.

Regrettably, the term “politeness” often triggers some confusion since it not only signifies a pragmatic concept, but also a lay concept and a sociolinguistic concept. The lay concept of politeness (termed the “social-norm view” of politeness by Fraser 1990: 220f) relates to “... proper social conduct and tactful consideration of others” (Kasper 1994: 3206). Etiquette books designed for different cultures are a good example.⁹ On the other hand, politeness as a sociolinguistic concept, is concerned with obligatory signals of respect or familiarity, which derive from such

characteristics as age, sex, family position and social position.¹⁰ Examples are address forms in English, the T/V forms in German and French and honorifics in Japanese and Korean. As Thomas (1995: 152) writes:

The reason why I say that deference has little to do with pragmatics is that generally, unless the speaker deliberately wishes to flout the behavioural norms of a given society ..., the speaker has no *choice* as to whether to use the deferent form or not — usage is dictated by sociolinguistic norms. (original emphasis)

In contrast, politeness in pragmatics is concerned with “...ways in which the relational function in linguistic action is expressed” (Kasper 1994: 3206).¹¹ In other words, it concerns how language is employed in a strategic manner to attain such goals as promoting or maintaining interpersonal relationships. In the following, the three principal approaches to the study of politeness from a pragmatic perspective are presented in a framework adopted from Fraser (1990). In other words, focus is first on the conversational-maxim view of politeness, then on the face-saving view and finally on the conversational-contract view. The relative emphasis accorded to these differing approaches reflects their importance for the study at hand.

2.4.1 Conversational-maxim view

Both the conversational-maxim and the face-saving view of politeness have their starting point in Grice’s account of verbal interaction (cf. Grice 1975).¹² Grice argues that because speakers are rational individuals and share common goals, conversations are governed by a co-operative principle, which reads:

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. (Grice 1975: 45)

Associated with this principle are four maxims — the maxims of quantity, quality, relation and manner — which are observed in effective conversation. Politeness theorists, such as Brown/Levinson (1987), Lakoff (1973, 1989) and Leech (1983), argue, however, that Grice’s account of verbal interaction is insufficient as it concentrates on the referential function of language and, thus, does not adequately account for politeness in language — indeed, politeness is characterised as a mere flouting of the maxims. While a co-operative request might, for instance, read “Bring out the rubbish”, a more polite one, depending on the particular situation, might be “Could you bring out the rubbish?” (flouting the maxim of manner, which states that one should avoid obscurity and ambiguity and be brief and orderly). Unlike Grice, politeness researchers highlight the relational function of language, and the related conflict and resultant trade-off between the goals of politeness and maximum efficiency.

Leech (1983) is the best known proponent of the conversational-maxim view of politeness. Like other researchers, such as Edmondson (1981) and Lakoff (1973, 1989), Leech is of the opinion that speakers not only heed the co-operative principle in conversation, but also a further principle relating to the interactional nature of conversation.¹³ This, he terms the politeness principle. It reads:

‘Minimize (other things being equal) the expression of impolite beliefs,’ ...
(‘Maximize (other things being equal) the expression of polite beliefs’) ...
(original emphasis) (Leech 1983:81)

The politeness principle interacts with, and is sometimes in conflict with, Grice’s co-operative principle. Similar to the co-operative principle, the politeness principle is divided into a number of maxims, namely the Maxims of Tact, Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement and Sympathy, each of which functions along a range of different pragmatic scales which allow a speaker to determine the relevant degree of modesty, agreement, generosity, etc. necessary in each particular case. Leech’s maxims are associated with particular illocutionary forces. Since directives (impositives in Leech’s terms) and commissives will be of interest in the present analysis, we will look here more closely at the maxims relating to these illocutionary forces, namely at the Tact and Generosity Maxims, both of which operate along the cost-benefit scale (Leech 1983: 106f *passim*).

The Tact Maxim is divided into two elements both of which concentrate on the hearer (Leech 1983: 109). These are: (a) ‘Minimize the cost to *h*’ and (b) ‘Maximise the benefit to *h*’ (original emphasis). This maxim explains, for example, why in such requests as “Can you come here for a minute?”, the understater, “a minute”, is employed — namely in order to minimise the cost to the hearer. The Generosity Maxim, on the other hand, is speaker-oriented (cf. Leech 1983: 133). It is formulated as follows: (a) Minimize benefit to self, (b) Maximize cost to self.

In some instances, both the Tact and Generosity Maxims are relevant, such as in the offer, “I’ll make you a cup of tea.” Here the benefit to the hearer is maximised (Tact Maxim, (b)) and the cost to self also maximised (Generosity Maxim, (b)) (more so than it would be in the offer “Do you want a cup of tea?” where the speaker is not explicitly mentioned). In other cases, however, one or other of the maxims may apply on their own and on occasion, unlike Grice’s maxims, both politeness maxims may be in conflict in which case the strongest wins out, as in the request “Could I have your notes from yesterday?” Here the benefit to self is maximised rather than minimised, competing against the Generosity Maxim (a), while the cost to the hearer is minimised (Tact Maxim (a)) (since the hearer is not explicitly mentioned as s/he would be in an utterance such as “Could you give me your notes?”) (cf. Leech 1983: 134).

Cross-cultural variation in politeness norms is accounted for in the theory by the suggestion that different maxims are given different relative weightings in

different cultures (cf. Leech 1983:80 *passim*). Indeed, in a study comparing compliment responses in Irish English with previous findings on such responses elicited by Chen (1993) for Chinese and American English, Schneider (1999) finds the Irish culture to give equal weight to the Agreement and Modesty Maxims in contrast to Chinese society and American society, the former in which more importance is attached to the Modesty Maxim; the latter in which the Agreement Maxim is most important (cf. also Schneider/Schneider 2000).

Apart from its contribution to explaining cultural differences, Leech's theory is of heuristic value (cf. Kasper 1990:194) and has also spawned much research. It is, however, not without criticism — the major faults relating firstly to the lack of empirical basis for the maxims suggested (cf. Kasper 1994:3208) and also to the apparently infinite number of maxims which may be suggested to account for regularities in language use — a feature which makes the theory cumbersome and effectively unfalsifiable.¹⁴ Furthermore, Leech has also been accused of disregarding uncooperative communication, such as debates and discussions (cf. Trosborg 1995:25). Finally, the model remains on a rather abstract level — as Watts et al. (1992:6f) point out, it does not explain how speakers decide on a particular strategy in order to realise a particular type and level of politeness.

2.4.2 Face-saving view

Brown/Levinson's (1978, 1987) theory remains the most well-known and influential politeness theory proposed to date. Similar to the conversational-maxim view, it is assumed here that conversationalists are rational individuals. Flouting of Grice's (1975) maxims is regarded a consequence of politeness.

A second central assumption of the theory relates to Goffman's (1955:213ff) concept of "face" which Brown and Levinson adopt and expand to include both positive and negative aspects. Face refers to "...the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself..." (Brown/Levinson 1987:61). In interaction, face "...can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to" (Brown/Levinson 1987:61). Since maintaining one's own face depends on maintenance of one's interactant's face, it is in the mutual interest of both conversational participants to preserve each other's face. Positive face refers to the human desire to belong, to be valued, accepted, recognised and liked by others, whereas negative face concerns the basic human need for independence and autonomy.

Brown and Levinson's approach is speech-act based. They suggest that certain speech acts are intrinsically face-threatening acts (FTA), i.e., they potentially threaten either the positive and/or negative face of the speaker and/or hearer. Consequently, given that speakers are rational individuals who select the most efficient means of achieving a particular end, they engage in face-management. In doing so, speakers choose from a range of five super-strategies and a large selection

of sub-strategies that strategy which best serves to reduce the particular face-threat at hand. In this way, it is made clear to the hearer that any face-threat is unintentional. The five super-strategies which speakers have at their disposal are in order of increasing politeness and decreasing directness (cf. Brown/Levinson 1987:68ff):

Do the act bald on the record

Clarity, directness and conciseness are the hallmarks of this strategy. Realisations follow Grice's maxims, as in the request, "Give me your notes."

Do the act with positive redress (positive politeness)

Here the hearer's need for acceptance is addressed by the speaker emphasising that s/he likes the hearer. Sub-strategies include the use of such in-group identity markers as slang, dialect, nicknames or jokes, or the expression of sympathy.

Do the act with negative redress (negative politeness)

Use of this strategy thematises the hearer's right to autonomy by, for example, providing the hearer — at least superficially — with a way out via the use of conventionally indirect request strategies, such as "Can you give me your notes?"

Do the act off the record

In this case, ambiguity serves to disguise the exact nature of the relevant illocutionary force and so shields the speaker from any negative consequences which may be associated with the realisation of the speech act in question. In this way, should the hearer feel his/her face threatened by the particular illocution, the speaker can plead that a different illocution was intended. Hints, metaphors and ellipsis are among the sub-strategies available.

Don't do the act

This particular strategy is chosen where the realisation of a particular speech act is regarded as too face-threatening.

In realising a speech act, the speaker has to choose from these five super-strategies — but what criteria does s/he base his/her decision on? According to Brown/Levinson (1987:74ff), the choice is a function of the relevant degree of face-threat (the "weightiness" of a face-threatening act). This is calculated by adding the relevant values for three independent, central social variables together. These values are the:

- *social distance* (D) between the speaker and the hearer, i.e., the degree of familiarity between interlocutors,
- *relative power* (P) of the speaker with respect to the hearer, i.e., "... the degree to which H can impose his own plans and his own self-evaluation (face) at the expense of S's plans and self-evaluation" (Brown/Levinson 1987:77),
- *absolute rank of imposition* in the particular culture (R)

The factors affecting the relative degree of imposition vary for different speech acts. For requests, for example, the relative degree of obligation for the H to

comply with the particular request is a relevant factor in certain cultures (cf. Blum-Kulka/House 1989: 141ff).

Each of these three social factors may be weighted differently in different cultures, leading to culture-specific views of the relative degree of face-threat and, thus, culture-specific strategy choices in a single situation (cf. Brown/Levinson 1987: 243ff).

Brown/Levinson's (1987) theory has been applauded for its insightful explanations into the workings of society (cf. Turner 1996:3), for the questions it has raised and, finally, for its tangibility and, thus, ease of application to further empirical research endeavours.

The negative aspects of the theory cannot, however, be overlooked and, indeed, the theory has been extensively criticised on a number of important points briefly mentioned in the following.¹⁵ Let us look firstly at the critical issue of universality.

Brown and Levinson's claim for universality for their theory has been criticised from a theoretical and empirical perspective on two accounts. Firstly, the universality of the concept of face itself has come into question since it presupposes that the notion of self is identical across cultures (cf. Kasper 1994:3208). In the light of accounts of researchers, such as Gu (1990:241f), Mao (1994:472) and Matsumoto (1988:423), however, it appears that Brown and Levinson's focus on individualism reflects an ethnocentric Western-bias. In Eastern cultures, more specifically in China and Japan, face is, these scholars argue, not just a personal concept, but rather is, or at least involves, an interpersonal concept, having to do with group membership. Secondly, the proposed universally-valid positive correlation between face and politeness has been questioned. Gu (1990:242), Ide (1989:239ff) and Matsumoto (1988) suggest, for example, that marking social standing rather than saving face is the primary motivation in interactions in Japan, i.e., social indexing rather than strategic politeness (cf. Kasper 1994:3208).¹⁶

A further criticism relates to the direct relationship proposed by Brown/Levinson (1987) between increasing indirectness and increasing politeness. This assumption has been proved to be incorrect by empirical evidence presented by Blum-Kulka (1987:136ff) and House-Edmondson (1986:290f). Related to this issue, is also the criticism that it may be illogical to assume that negative politeness is employed when the degree of face-threat is relatively high, and positive politeness when it is somewhat lower, regardless of whether it is the positive or negative face which is actually affected (cf. Lim/Bowers 1990:418, Turner 1996:6).

A third major concern relates to the direct relationship suggested by Brown and Levinson between increasing weight of contextual factors and increasing politeness. This has been shown by empirical research to be inaccurate. Wolfson (1988:32ff), on the basis of her own research on middle class American English and those of other researchers' findings, proposes a bulge theory to explain why intimates and status unequals and strangers all use approximately the same politeness patterns

and why this relative level of politeness is lower than that invested by non-intimates, status equal friends, co-workers and acquaintances. According to her theory, less effort has to be invested at the two extremes of social distance due to the low negotiability of the relationship.

The equal weighting suggested for the factors P, D and R has also been criticised, and it has been proposed that the constituent variables may not be as independent as has been claimed — the values of P and D may, for example, possibly influence the value of R, and a high P differential may automatically create a degree of distance.¹⁷

2.4.3 Conversational-contract view

The final central approach to politeness phenomena to be addressed very briefly in this context is that proposed by Fraser (1990) and Fraser/Nolen (1981). This view of politeness differs from both of the above in that politeness is not regarded here as additional to interaction, but rather as an integral part of it. In addition, the approach taken is discourse-based rather than speech-act based. According to this theory, interactants enter a conversation with a particular conception as to the rights and obligations of both parties based on their social relationship. These perceptions form the conversational contract and to abide by the terms of this contract is to act in a polite manner. Indeed, as Kasper (1994: 3207) puts it: “Acting politely ... is virtually the same as using language appropriately” according to this theory. However, either in the course of, or following, a particular conversation, such perceptions may be readjusted due to the dynamics of interaction (cf. Fraser 1990: 232). Although this theory can be commended for highlighting the interactive nature of conversation, overall the theory is difficult to apply to empirical research given its abstract and imprecise nature (cf. Thomas 1995: 177). As a result, it is of minor importance in the present investigation.

2.5 A discourse perspective

From a linguistic point of view, it was the criticisms levelled against speech act theory concerning the sentence as the unit of analysis, the lack of consideration of interaction and also the disregard of the linguistic context in the allocation of illocutionary force which prompted the development of discourse analysis.

We have described discourse competence as concerning cohesiveness in form and coherence in meaning in both written and spoken texts (cf. 2.2.1). But, what is “discourse analysis”? This question is addressed in the following section. Following this, the discourse model developed by Edmondson (1981) — the model employed in the present analysis of interlanguage discourse competence — is presented.

2.5.1 Discourse analysis — The hypernym

The task of defining discourse analysis is not without difficulty given the breadth of analyses of naturally occurring language above the level of the sentence which researchers have undertaken in fields of study, such as linguistics and literary and film theory (cf. McHoul 1994: 940, Potter/Wetherell 1987: 6f). Indeed, even within linguistics, there is no unanimous understanding of the term “discourse analysis”, since it refers to the study of the relationship between language and ideology (termed the “critical approach” to discourse), the study of discourse as text where formal linguistic methods of analysis are employed in the analysis of written language above the level of the sentence (text linguistics), and finally also to the study of discourse as spoken language or conversation.¹⁸ Since the interest of the present study is spoken language, it is the latter approach which is taken here. Within this latter approach, two major fields of study can be identified — namely conversation analysis, a sociologically-based approach, and discourse analysis, a linguistically-based approach. Both conversation analysis and discourse analysis investigate “... how coherence and sequential organization in discourse is produced and understood” (Levinson 1983: 286). In other words, the concern is with examining the way in which illocutions are linked together to produce order in conversation. The linguistic approach is taken in the present study.¹⁹ Since no unanimous definition of discourse analysis exists, it will, for present purposes, be defined in accordance with Stubbs (1983: 1), as a field “... concerned with language in use in social contexts, and in particular with interaction or dialogue between speakers”.

2.5.2 An integrative model of discourse

The discourse model developed by Edmondson (1981), and later adapted in Edmondson/House (1981), is employed in the present analysis due to its origins in conversational data and also to its concentration on the speech act. It is based on roleplay data elicited within the framework of the research project, “Communicative Competence as a Learning Objective in Foreign Language Teaching (FLT)”, conducted at the University of Bochum.

Edmondson’s (1981) model, as indeed an earlier discourse model developed by Sinclair/Coulthard (1975) of the Birmingham School, adopts a rank system which shows a clear influence from Hallidayan systemic linguistics (cf. Halliday 1961). Similar to the rank scale of morpheme, word, phrase, clause and sentence in systemic linguistics, a hierarchical ordering of functional units of discourse is proposed. In Edmondson’s model, the act is identified as the smallest element of interactional structure. Following from this level are the move, exchange, transaction, phase and interaction. Each of these levels consists of combinations of units of the same rank and each level is made up of one or more units of the lower ranks.

The move and exchange are the primary levels of analysis in this model of interaction. The move is defined as a functional unit which is "...the smallest significant element by means of which a conversation is developed" (Edmondson 1981:6). A speaker makes at least one interactional move in one turn of speech. Edmondson identifies a number of different moves used to describe interactional structure, the most important of which are the I(nitiate) (also termed Proffer), Sa(tisfy) and Contra (C)/Counter.

An Initiate is a move which initiates an exchange and a Satisfy a move which produces an outcome, whether negative or positive. Since Satisfys always relate to the move immediately preceding, the outcome may be either local or relating to a complete exchange. A Contra "... counts interactionally as an attempt on the part of the producer of the Contra to cause his conversational partner to withdraw the preceding Proffer" (Edmondson 1981:88) and, finally, a Counter "... counts as an attempt by a speaker to cause the content of the preceding move ... to be amended, qualified, or withdrawn in the light of the content of the Counter" (Edmondson 1981:89). In short, Contras do not call for a specific response whereas Counters do.

Moving up a level, an exchange is defined by Edmondson/House (1981:38) as:

... a conversational unit in which both partners together reach a conversational *outcome*, i.e., they reach a point of agreement, and the conversation may then proceed to further business, or indeed to a closing ritual. (original emphasis)

Exchanges consist of a structured sequence of at least two interactional moves produced by two different speakers. They always end in a Satisfy, whether produced verbally or not. They may be simple as in the exchange structure Initiate–Satisfy or Initiate–Contra–Satisfy, or complex, as in the case of Initiate–*n*(Contra)–Satisfy, for example, where *n* is greater than 1 ($n > 1$). Exchanges, in their turn, link to form transactions — a concept approximately equivalent to topic.

At each interactional level, obligatory (head) and optional (supportive) units are to be differentiated in the model. So, for example, while head moves, such as Initiates, Contras and Satisfys, play an important role in the underlying interactional structure, supporting moves, such as grounders (used to give explanations) or disarmers (serve to anticipate and attempt to avoid an offence), are only present on the surface, their employment being purely strategic and not serving to move the conversation towards an outcome.

Rather than concentrating exclusively on interactional aspects, as Sinclair/Coulthard (1975) do, Edmondson combines speech act theory with a study of interaction. In conversation, Edmondson/House (1981:36) explain, speakers produce utterances which have both an illocutionary and an interactional value. The speech acts produced fill in slots provided by the elements of the interactional structure of a conversation and, in this way, enable a conversation to proceed. Discourse is, thus, analysed twice in Edmondson's model — for illocutionary force

and also for interactional value. In Edmondson's framework, the utterance "Can I give you a hand?", would thus be classified as a Willing (in Searle's terms, an offer) (illocutionary act) and also as an Initiate (interactional move). Here the intention expressed is seen as playing an important role in determining function.

2.6 Pragmatics across cultures

The comparison of pragmatics in and between different cultures has been approached from a number of perspectives. From an initial contrastive approach, researchers then moved to a cross-cultural approach. Both perspectives are briefly discussed in the following.

2.6.1 Contrastive pragmatics

Following in the footsteps of phonology, syntax and semantics, studies with a contrastive focus have also been conducted in pragmatics. Typically, such studies concentrate on how particular communicative functions are realised in different languages. The focus is, thus, *pragmalinguistic*. A typical study would be the investigation of the strategies employed in the realisation of the speech act "request" in German and in English. Underlying such contrastive investigations is an assumption that language use is universal, i.e., that speech acts operate by universal principles — that the strategies and means for realising speech acts and conveying politeness are essentially the same across languages and cultures. Such a universal assumption has, however, been much debated in the literature and indeed researchers have since focused to a large degree on the culture-specific nature of language (cf. 2.6.2.2 on this issue). As the argument for the culture-specificity of language use caught flame, research in contrastive pragmatics gradually gave way to research in cross-cultural pragmatics.

2.6.2 Cross-cultural pragmatics

This research area not only takes the *pragmalinguistic*, but also the *sociopragmatic* side of language into account. In House-Edmondson's (1986:282) words:

Cross-cultural pragmatics is a field of inquiry which compares the ways in which two or more languages are used in communication. Cross-cultural pragmatics is an important new branch of contrastive linguistic studies because in any two languages different features of the social context may be found to be relevant in deciding what can be expressed and how it is conventionally expressed.

Typically, research focuses on the range and contextual distribution of strategies and linguistic forms used to convey illocutionary meaning and politeness.

The Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) is the most well-known research project in the area of cross-cultural pragmatics/interlanguage pragmatics. Within the framework of this large-scale project, both native and non-native varieties of request and apology realisations were established for different social contexts across various languages and cultures using a single coding system (cf., e.g., Blum-Kulka et al. 1989a,b, House 1989a,b). The method employed was the discourse completion task (DCT) and the varieties analysed included American English, Australian English, British English, Canadian French, Danish, German, Hebrew and Argentinean Spanish.²⁰

Given the importance of culture in cross-cultural pragmatics, and as will also become apparent, in interlanguage pragmatics, let us now attempt a characterisation of this concept.

2.6.2.1 *Culture*

What is culture? How can this broad concept be defined? As many researchers note, culture is a vague notion, lacking any unanimous definition, not least due to the heterogeneity of society (cf., e.g., Hofstede 1993:18f, Knapp/Knapp-Potthoff 1987:4, Koole/Thijse ten 1994:55). However, despite this lack of clarity, the vast array of anthropological definitions agree at least on a number of basic elements of culture, namely that culture is (a) man-made and learnable, although man's ability to learn a second culture may be blocked, (b) related to human groups rather than to individuals and, lastly, (c) found in symbols and action (cf. Koole/Thijse ten 1994:55ff).

More important for present purposes is the deep-rooted relationship between language and culture — a non-surprising link given the role of language as an instrument of social interaction. Indeed, House (2000:161f), drawing on a wide selection of her own data on intercultural misunderstandings and other empirical research, proposes the following continua of cross-cultural differences related to language use in an Anglo-Saxon and German context.²¹

<i>German culture</i>		<i>Anglo-Saxon culture</i>
Directness	↔	Indirectness
Orientation towards Self	↔	Orientation towards Other
Orientation towards Content	↔	Orientation towards Addressees
Explicitness	↔	Implicitness
Ad-Hoc Formulation	↔	Verbal Routines

It follows, therefore, that for the second language learner, learning a new language also entails learning about the cultural distinctiveness of the speech community in question (cf. Saville-Troike 1976:46). Indeed, as Byram (1988:17) notes:

... to acquire and use a foreign language is to enter another way of life, another rationality, another mode of behaviour, however similar it may appear to that of the learner.

However, it is too often precisely this element of language which is overlooked and, instead, the road to be travelled by language learners is frequently viewed as simply a matter of mastering a distinct system of signs, without reference to the context in which these particular signs are used. Where there is a lack of awareness of cultural distinctiveness, the home (L1) culture is looked on as the norm; the target language culture as deviant. Indeed, it is often only in the L2 community where such differences are at first realised (cf. 3.4.1). Misunderstandings, similar to those reported so often in the literature result (cf. 1).

2.6.2.2 *Universality vs. culture-specificity*

The question as to whether pragmatic phenomena are universal or culture-specific is one which has been hotly debated in the literature to date (cf., e.g., Blum-Kulka 1991, Blum-Kulka et al. 1989a: 8ff, Wierzbicka 1991: 67ff, M.-C. Yu 1999). It is a question which has important repercussions for language learning as universality would imply a smaller learning load as far as pragmatic issues are concerned.

Two central issues are the focus of much of the discussion concerning universality: (a) the universality of speech acts and of the strategies and linguistic means available for realising speech acts and (b) the universality of theoretical frameworks. Since the issues relating to part (b) are best exemplified with reference to Brown/Levinson's (1987: 61ff) concept of face, the reader is referred to the discussion presented in 2.4.2. Part (a) is discussed in the following.

Fraser/Nolen (1981) and Searle (1969) are two researchers who uphold the universal viewpoint regarding the rules regulating the realisation of speech acts. Searle claims, for example, that because the strategies employed in each language to perform indirect speech acts are based on universal felicity conditions, these strategies are also universal. Fraser/Nolen (1981) even go so far as to suggest that not only are realisation strategies for requests the same across languages, but also the ranking of the deference level of strategies.

Empirical research findings have shed light on claims of universality and relativised them to a certain degree. What emerges are a number of areas which appear to be universal and, which given learners' L1 knowledge, can, therefore, be believed to facilitate the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence. These areas include the existence of inference and of indirect speech act realisations (cf. Blum-Kulka 1989, 1991: 255), the use of pragmatic routines (cf. Coulmas 1981), the ability to vary linguistic realisations based on the contextual constellation of a given situation (cf. Blum-Kulka 1991: 255 *passim*), a sensitivity for the importance of contextual variables (cf. Brown/Levinson 1987), the basic speech act categories (cf. Kasper/Schmidt 1996: 154), external and internal modification (cf. Blum-Kulka

1991:261) and also the broad range of realisation strategies for speech acts, such as apologies and requests (cf. Blum-Kulka 1989, Kasper 1992:211, Olshtain 1989).

Areas of cross-cultural variation, on the other hand, include the different weighting of specific contextual factors across cultures. It has been shown, for example, that status is more important to the Japanese than to the Americans (cf. Takahashi/Beebe 1993). In addition, it seems that some speech acts (declarations) are culture-bound due to cross-cultural differences in institutional structures (cf. Kasper/Schmidt 1996:154) and, as Schmidt/Richards (1980:138) suggest, there may also be differences in illocutionary force within the broad categories of illocutionary point, although there is a lack of research in this area.

Pragmalinguistic conventions have also been found to differ across cultures. Whereas an ability question is a conventionalised request in English, it is not in Polish, for example. Likewise, a conventionalised offer in English of the form “Would you like x?” carries the force of a question rather than an offer in Polish (cf. Wierzbicka 1985:148ff). This finding disconfirms Searle’s (1975) belief that the precise strategies for indirect speech acts can be specified on the basis of the felicity conditions. A further example is Holmes/Brown’s (1987:526) finding that complimenting is a conventional request strategy in cultures, such as the Samoan culture, but not in most European countries.

It is these areas of cross-cultural variation which encompass scope for breakdowns in communication, for conflict and for the establishment of negative stereotypes (cf. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989a:6). Indeed, Thomas (1983:107) goes so far as to say:

In my view, every instance of national or ethnic stereotyping should be seen as a reason for calling in the pragmaticist and discourse analyst!
(original emphasis)

In other words, she believes that that which underlies stereotypes is simply different pragmatic principles at work. Similarly, differences in pragmatic norms represent potential pitfalls for learners. As Kasper/Schmidt (1996:155) warn:

Whereas learners may hesitate to transfer strategies that may be universal in some cases, a more common problem is that they assume universality (and transferability) when it is not present.

The concept of transfer is discussed in detail in 3.1.1.1.

2.6.3 Interlanguage pragmatics

Interlanguage pragmatics has been defined as:

... the investigation of non-native speakers’ comprehension and production of speech acts, and the acquisition of L2-related speech act knowledge.
(Kasper/Dahl 1991:215)

... the study of nonnative speakers' use and acquisition of L2 pragmatic knowledge ... (Kasper/Rose 1999:81)

... the study of nonnative speakers' comprehension, production, and acquisition of linguistic action in L2, or, put briefly, ILP [interlanguage pragmatics] investigates 'how to do things with words' (Austin) in a second language. (Kasper 1998b:184)

Underlying these three definitions are two basic points. Firstly, interlanguage pragmatics is concerned with language in use, i.e., with language as action — the subject of pragmatics. Secondly, as the term “interlanguage pragmatics” itself indeed suggests, research should concentrate both on learners' use and acquisition of pragmatic knowledge.

It is, however, cross-cultural pragmatics from which interlanguage pragmatics is a direct off-shoot — investigations of pragmatics across culture inevitably having led to the question as to what language learners do in a second or foreign language. Since its conception in the early 1980s, therefore, most of the research questions, the methodology and indeed the theoretical background of interlanguage pragmatics have stemmed from cross-cultural pragmatics rather than from second language acquisition, the other parent discipline of interlanguage pragmatics. Indeed, this bias is even reflected in the definitions of interlanguage pragmatics proposed above, since in all three definitions reference is made to non-native speakers (NNS) rather than to learners.

The body of research on interlanguage realisations of various speech acts is large.²² Such studies concentrate predominantly on learner/native speaker differences in the range and contextual distribution of strategies and linguistic forms used to convey illocutionary meaning and politeness. In a recent overview, Bardovi-Harlig (2001) identifies the main areas of learner/native speaker differences in production to lie in the actual speech acts realised, the choice of semantic formulas employed to realise a particular speech act, the content of these semantic formulas and, finally, in the form which these realisations take.

As far as the influence of second language acquisition is concerned, development issues have remained largely neglected in interlanguage pragmatics. Consequently, despite a number of key articles having been devoted to acquisitional issues in recent years, such as Bardovi-Harlig (1999a), Kasper (2000b), Kasper/Rose (1999) and Kasper/Schmidt (1996), and despite a slow increase in the number of developmental studies conducted (above all, via an increase in interlanguage pragmatic cross-sectional studies), many questions still remain open and a lack of understanding of development patterns and indeed of the factors which influence interlanguage pragmatic development is to be identified. Indeed, Bardovi-Harlig (1999a:678), recently commenting on the current lack of research in this regard, states: “The study of how L2-related speech act knowledge is acquired is more of a

desideratum than a reality”.²³ Unlike the case in other sister interlanguage specialisations, such as interlanguage phonology, morphology, syntax or semantics, or indeed in first language acquisition research, it can be suggested, therefore, that the understanding of development in ILP is so lacking that interlanguage pragmatics has ignored one of its main goals, “...the acquisition of L2-related speech act knowledge” (Kasper/Dahl 1991:215) and, with the exception of studies relating to transfer from L1 to L2, thus largely distanced itself from second language acquisition research, at the core of which lie development issues. Apart from being a symptom of interlanguage pragmatics’ roots in cross-cultural pragmatics, this state of affairs is also, as Kasper (1992:204) comments, partly due to the extensive concentration on universal grammar theory in second language acquisition, a theory in which pragmatics has no place.

In the following sections, the concept of pragmatic failure, an important concept in explaining misunderstanding which occurs in learner communication, is outlined and the dearth of development studies is highlighted.

2.6.3.1 *Pragmatic failure at the cultural crossroads*

Learners with inadequacies in their pragmatic competence are open to pragmatic failure, which occurs when “...H perceives the force of S’s utterance as other than S intended s/he should perceive it” (Thomas 1983:94). While pragmatic failure may occur in NS–NS interactions, it is more likely to be a feature of NS–NNS or, indeed, NNS–NNS communication, given the differences in linguistic and cultural background. It is a common source of misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication.

Two principal types of pragmatic failure are distinguished in the literature, namely pragmlinguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure. Pragmlinguistic failure:

... occurs when the pragmatic force mapped by S onto a given utterance is systematically different from the force most frequently assigned to it by native speakers of the target language, or when speech act strategies are inappropriately transferred from L₁ to L₂. (Thomas 1983:99)

It is a result of difficulties in the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force.

Pragmlinguistic failure may result from interlanguage-specific errors as well as from pragmatic transfer (cf. 3.1). A typical example is when a learner believes an utterance to have the illocutionary force of a request, but due to an inappropriate use of directness or of modification, the hearer interprets the utterance as a command.

Sociopragmatic failure is described as a lack of awareness or disregard for “...social conditions placed on language in use” stemming from “...cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behaviour” (Thomas 1983:99). An example is where the speaker judges the social status of his/her

interlocutor to be lower than the hearer's actual status in the particular society and, thus, acts in an impolite manner from the hearer's point of view.

2.6.3.2 *Developmental research in interlanguage pragmatics*

The lack of research into, and thus knowledge of, development issues outlined in 2.6.3 is exemplified in this section. Table 1 and Table 2 present an overview of those interlanguage pragmatic studies which have addressed developmental issues to date excluding those which examine the effect of classroom intervention.²⁴ The division into two tables reflects a fundamental differentiation between longitudinal and cross-sectional studies. While longitudinal studies trace the development of the same participants throughout time, cross-sectional studies compare data from different groups of informants at one point in time, implicitly assuming, for example, that a lower proficiency group or a group which has not stayed in the target culture will respectively "turn into" a higher proficiency group or a group with experience in the L2 speech community in time.²⁵

Table 1 and Table 2 highlight a number of similarities and differences between the interlanguage pragmatic cross-sectional and longitudinal studies conducted to date. It is clear, for example, that for both types of studies, English is the most common L2 investigated — appearing in twelve of the twenty-two longitudinal studies (counting according to the structure of the table) and in seventeen out of the twenty-nine cross-sectional studies listed here — hardly a surprising finding, given its international standing. In the longitudinal studies, Japanese is also a popular L2, appearing in five of the twenty-two studies, although this high figure is not reflected in the cross-sectional studies, where Japanese only features once. It is noteworthy that, to the best of my knowledge, the only studies dealing with German as an L2 have been the cross-sectional study by Weydt (1981) and the longitudinal study by Barron (2000a,b). Most of the longitudinal studies focus on small numbers of learners relative to the cross-sectional studies — of the twenty-two longitudinal studies documented here, only nine have twelve or more learner informants. These low numbers are most likely a product of the type of investigation which makes the researcher reliant on informants' continued participation over time.

The cross-sectional and longitudinal studies also differ in the data gathered. Ethnographic data is considerably more frequent in the longitudinal investigations: hence also the greater number of longitudinal case studies. The tendency towards use of elicitation instruments in cross-sectional studies necessarily means that even those informants categorised as beginners or of low proficiency are not true beginners since a certain level of proficiency is required to complete such tasks as production questionnaires, multiple choice questionnaires (MCQ), or indeed, roleplays (cf. Kasper 1998b: 191, Kasper/Rose 1999: 87).

The findings of these studies, both longitudinal and cross-sectional, are discussed in detail within the framework of 3.2 and 3.3.2.1.2.

Table 1. Longitudinal interlanguage pragmatic studies

Study	Pragmatic feature	Data	Informants (<i>n</i>)	L1	L2	Time frame
Bahns et al. 1986	pragmatic routines	tape-recordings, hand-written notes	children, beginning (4)	German	English (SL)	3 mths
Bardovi-Hartlig/Hartford 1993a, 1996	suggestions, rejections	authentic discourse (taped academic advising sessions)	advanced (10), English NS (6)	various	English (SL)	14 weeks
Barron 2000a,b	2000a: offers, refusals of offers 2000b: requests	2000a: FDCI, roleplays + retrospective interviews, post-year abroad questionnaire 2000b: DCT	advanced (33), Irish English NS (27), German NS (34)	Irish English	German (FL)	10 mths (study abroad)
Bouton 1992, 1994	comprehension of implicature	MCQ	advanced (30)	various	English (SL)	4.5 yrs
Churchill 2001b	requests	notebook data	lower level (47)	Japanese	English (FL)	1 mth
Code/Anderson 2001	requests	DCT	lower level (35)	Japanese	English (FL)	10 mths (homestay)
Cohen 1997	pragmatic ability	written & audio-taped journal entries	beginning (1)	American English	Japanese (FL)	4 mths
DuFon 1999, 2000	1999: experience questions & their negative responses, greetings, terms of address 2000: negative responses to experience questions	1999: naturalistic interactions, learner journals, fieldnotes (participant observation), interviews, questionnaires, site documents 2000: naturalistic interactions, learner journals	true beginners (3), intermediates (3)	various: Caucasian Americans [NS of English] (3), Japanese-American [NS of English] (1), Japanese (2)	Indonesian (FL/SL)	4 mths (study abroad)
Ellis 1992, 1997	requests	authentic classroom discourse	pre-teens (10 yrs, 11 yrs), beginning (2)	Portuguese, Punjabi	English (SL)	1 yr 3mths, 2 yrs
Hoffman-Hicks 1999	greetings, leave-takings, compliments	production questionnaire (open-ended, dialogue), pre-year abroad questionnaire, retrospective interviews + case studies: authentic data (social gatherings), oral roleplays	adults (14), French NS (25), [non-study abroad students (10)]	American English	French (FL)	9 mths (stay abroad)
Kanagy 1999, Kanagy/Igarashi 1997	pragmatic routines	direct observation, video/audio recordings (authentic immersion kindergarten classroom discourse)	children, beginning (19)	American English	Japanese (FL)	10 mths
Kasanga 1999	requests	observation (field notes)	female adult (1)	unknown	English (SL)	2 mths
Kondo 1997	apologies	pre-year abroad questionnaire, DCT, assessment questionnaire	teenagers, (proficiency — not given) (45), Japanese NS (48), American English NS (40)	Japanese	English (FL)	1 yr (exchange)

Table 1. (continued)

Study	Pragmatic feature	Data	Informants (<i>n</i>)	L1	L2	Time frame
Marriott 1995	pragmatic routines, honorifics	oral proficiency interview, daily diary, post-exchange oral interview (picture description, roleplay, introspective interview on description)	beginning (8)	Australian English	Japanese (FL)	1 yr (homestay)
Matsumura 2001	offering advice	MCQ	advanced [TEFL scores: 480–600] (97) [non-study abroad students (102)]	Japanese	English (FL)	8 mths
Meyer in progress	apologies, complaints, requests	DCT, roleplay, interviews, learner diaries, field notes	advanced (16), [German NS (30), American English NS (30); from an earlier study]	German	English (FL)	1 yr (homestay)
Raupach 1984	pragmatic formulae	oral reaction to written questions (pre and post), retrospective comments	advanced (2)	German	French (FL)	1 term (stay abroad)
Salsbury/Bardovi-Harlig 2000, 2001	2000: expression of modality (maybe, think, could, would) in oppositional talk (disagreements, challenges, denials) 2001: epistemic modality in disagreements	conversational interviews (learner-learner, learner-NS)	2000: beginning (8) 2001: beginning (3)	2000: various (Arabic, Korean, Spanish, Japanese, French/Bambara bilingual) 2001: Korean, Spanish, French/Bambara bilingual	English (SL)	1 yr
Sawyer 1992	pragmatic affective particle <i>ne</i>	interview	beginning (11)	various	Japanese (SL)	1 yr
Schmidt 1983	requests	authentic discourse	beginning (1) (Wes)	Japanese	English (SL)	3 yrs
Schmidt/Frota 1986	conversational ability, answering questions affirmatively	learner diary, taped conversations	beginning (1) (Schmidt)	English	Brazilian Portuguese (SL)	5 mths
Siegal 1995, 1996	communicative competence (e.g., honorifics, female language)	learner diaries, interviews, field observations, audio-taped authentic discourse, newspaper/magazine articles	women, intermediate to advanced (4)	New Zealand English (3), Hungarian/German (1)	Japanese (FL)	18 mths (stay abroad)

Table 2. Cross-sectional interlanguage pragmatic studies with a focus on development^a

Study	Pragmatic feature	Data	Informants (n)	L1	L2
Bardovi-Hartig/Dornyei 1998	pragmatic vs. grammatical awareness of requests, apologies, suggestions, refusals	video judgement task	low intermediate (370), intermediate (285), advanced (25)	(a) various, (15 Lis) (173), (b) Hungarian (370), (c) Italian (112), (d) (Hungarian EFL teachers (25), American English native speaker ESL teachers (28)	English: ((a) + (e): SL, (b–d): FL)
Belick 2002, in progress	2002: phatic communication in progress: requests, acceptances/refusals, complaints, apologies, phatic communication	2002, in progress: roleplays, NS acceptability judgements, retrospective interviews	2002, in progress: intermediate/advanced students [½–1 yr. in target speech community] (30), intermediate/advanced students [not in target speech community] (20), in progress: English NS, German NS (data collection in progress)	German	English (FL)
Blum-Kulka/Ohlshain 1986	requests	DCT	Total learners (245), ^b Hebrew NS; (172), English NS; (28) low intermediate: (not given), high intermediate: (not given), advanced: (not given) < 1 year: (not given), 2–4 years: (not given), 5–7 years: (not given)	various, American English (142)	Hebrew (SL)
DuFon 1999, 2000 ^c	1999: experience questions & their negative responses, greetings, terms of address 2000: negative responses to experience questions	1999: naturalistic interactions, learner journals, fieldnotes (participant observation), interviews, questionnaires, site documents 2000: naturalistic interactions, learner journals	true beginners (3), intermediates (3)	various: Caucasian Americans [English NS] (3), Japanese-American [English NS] (1), Japanese (2)	Indonesian (FL/SL)
Hassall 1997, 2001	requests	roleplay, rating scale	low (3), middle (15), high (2), Bahasa Indonesian NS (18)	Australian English	Bahasa Indonesian (FL)
Hill 1997	requests	DCT, assessment questionnaire	low (male) (20), intermediate (male) (20), advanced (male) (20), English NS (20), Japanese NS (male) (10)	Japanese	English (FL)
Houck/Gass 1996 Kärkkäinen 1992	refusals epistemic modality	video-recorded roleplay stimulated task-oriented conversations	low proficiency (2), higher proficiency (2) low proficiency (10), high proficiency (14), English NS (not given), Finnish NS (not given) Length of stay: 1 < x < 3 (88)	Japanese Finnish	English (SL) English (FL/SL not specified)
Keskes 1999	pragmatic routines	DTT (Dialogue Interpretation Test), DCT, PST (Problem Solving Test)	low (28), intermediate (59), advanced (19), English NS (34)	various	English (SL)
Kerckes 1992	use & perception of assertiveness & supportiveness (sympathy, advice)	rating scale, DCT	university year 1 (46), university year 2 (34), university advanced (34)	American English	Spanish (FL)
Kolke 1996	comprehension of suggestions	videotaped dialog prompts, rating scale			

Table 2. (continued)

Study	Pragmatic feature	Data	Informants (<i>n</i>)	L1	L2
Limmaneeprasert 1993	apologies, responses to apologies	DC (Dialogue Construction) questionnaires, metapragmatic assessments (ranking), subjective proficiency analysis	beginning (16), advanced (18), Thai NS (18)	American English	Thai (FL/SL)
Maeshiba et al. 1996	apologies	DCT, rating scale (NS)	intermediate (30), advanced (30), Japanese NS (30), English NS (30)	Japanese	English (SL)
Olshtain/Blum-Kulka 1985	assessment of request & apology strategies	rating scale	length of residence in Israel, < 2 yrs (36), 2–10 yrs (44), > 10 yrs (44), Hebrew NS (160), English NS (172)	various	Hebrew (SL)
Omar 1991	greetings	production questionnaire, roleplay, authentic speech (office hour conversation)	beginning (16), intermediate (12), advanced (4)	American English	Kiswahili (FL)
Robinson 1992	refusals	DCT, self-report	intermediate (6), advanced (6)	Japanese	English (SL context — FL/SL)
Rose 2000	requests, apologies, compliment responses	audio-taped cartoon oral production task (COPT)	Primary 2 [age: 7yrs] (20), Primary 4 [age: 9yrs] (14), Primary 6 [age: 11yrs] (19), Cantonese NS (15 per age group)	Cantonese (Hong Kong)	English (FL)
Scarcella 1979a, Scarcella/Brunak 1981	invitations, requests	roleplay	beginning (10), advanced (10), English NS (6)	Arabic	English (SL)
Scarcella 1983	conversational devices	audio-taped interview	beginning (20), intermediate (20), advanced (23), English NS (6)	various	English (SL)
Schauer 2001	expressions of gratitude, responses to gratitude	DCT	length of residence in an English-speaking environment, approx. 9 mths (15), not at all / less than 3 mths (14), English NS (16), German NS (17)	German	English (FL)
Swanes 1992	requests	DCT	length of stay: 8–12 mths: (44), 12–36 mths: (21), > 3 yrs: (35) various levels of proficiency	various (European, American, Asian, African)	Norwegian (SL)
Takahashi 1996	transferability of request strategies	rating scale	low (65), high (77)	Japanese	English (FL)
Takahashi/Beebe 1987	refusals	DCT	ESL learners in US (low & high proficiency) (20), EFL learners in Japan (low & high proficiency) (20), Japanese NS (20), English NS (20)	Japanese	English (SL/FL)
Takahashi/DuFon 1989	requests	roleplay, interview	beginning (3), intermediate (3), advanced (3) From Takahashi (1987): Japanese NS, American English NS	Japanese	English (SL)

Table 2. (continued)

Study	Pragmatic feature	Data	Informants (<i>n</i>)	L1	L2
Trosborg 1987, 1995	1987: apologies 1995: apologies, requests, complaints	roleplay	1987: intermediate (not given), lower advanced (not given), higher advanced (not given) 1995: high beginners (not given), intermediate (not given), advanced (not given) 1987, 1995: Danish NS (not given), English NS (not given)	Danish	English (FL)
Warga 2002a,b	requests	DCT, closed roleplay	high school pupils: 4 th -year learning French (27), 5 th -year learning French (27), 6 th -year learning French (30) Austrian German NS (20), French NS (45)	Austrian German	French (FL)
Weizman 1993	requests (hints)	DCT	length of stay from < 1 to > 10 yrs (305), Hebrew NS (173)	various	Hebrew (SL)
Weydt 1981	modal particles	roleplay	learners (12) length of stay: various (not given) length of instruction: various (not given) German NS (not given)	not given	German (SL/FL — not given)
Yamashita 1996	refusals, requests, apologies	self-assessment, language lab oral production test, open DCT, roleplay, roleplay assessment, multiple choice DCT	length of stay: 2 mths-9 yrs beginning (12), intermediate (20), advanced (15)	American English	Japanese: (FL: 13, SL: 34)

^a Of those studies presented in the table, not all concentrate on development issues to a similar extent. Yamashita (1996), for example, investigates differences between learners of varying proficiencies, however, her primary aim is to investigate the variation in different test formats for measuring the pragmatic competence of, in her case, learners of Japanese with English as the L1. Similarly, Robinson (1992) is also primarily concerned with methodological issues — notably the use of retrospective interviews in interlanguage pragmatic research. Development issues, thus, take a back seat in these studies. Likewise, Weizman (1993), although she carried out a cross-sectional study, was unable to discuss development issues since her learners' of Hebrew use of hints in requesting matched those of NS of Hebrew from an early stage of stay in the target speech community. There was, thus, no room for development, although a slight decrease in the use of hints was noted (cf. Weizman 1993: 130, *passim*). Furthermore, Blum-Kulka/Olshain (1986) and Takahashi/Beebe (1987) although of a cross-sectional design, concentrate predominantly on highlighting differences in NS/learner use and the effect of transfer. Also, Kärkkäinen (1992) focuses primarily on NS/learner differences in the use of modality. The cross-sectional comparison in this study is primarily limited to an analysis of the range of epistemic devices used by low and high proficiency learners irrespective of function.

^b The number of learners involved in this study was given as 240 (cf. Blum-Kulka/Olshain 1986: 169), but as 245 later in the article (1986: 172).

^c Both of these studies are both cross-sectional and longitudinal since the informants whose use of language was investigated over a period of four months were of two levels — beginning and intermediate.

CHAPTER 3

Acquisitional issues in learner pragmatics

After addressing issues of language use in interlanguage pragmatics, we now turn to acquisitional issues. Here the focus is on the nature of learner language (3.1), on a number of theories relevant to the explanation of L2 pragmatic acquisition (3.2.1) and on previous research findings pertaining to the effect of proficiency on the development of pragmatic competence (3.2.2). Possible phases of development of L2 pragmatic competence are discussed (3.2.3), as is the influence of different types of input on interlanguage (3.3). In this latter section, the question of the influence of the target speech community will be the major focus, and findings from longitudinal and cross-sectional studies on the effect of a stay in the target speech community reported. Lastly, individual factors influencing second language acquisition are addressed (3.4).

3.1 Interlanguage — A componential characterisation

The term “interlanguage” as it is employed in second language acquisition is attributed to Selinker who first used it in 1972. It refers to:

...a continuum between the L1 and L2 along which all learners traverse. At any point along the continuum, the learners’ language is systematic, i.e., rule-governed, and common to all learners, any difference being explicable by differences in their learning experience. (Larsen-Freeman/Longman 1991:60)

In other words, as a point along a continuum, a learner’s interlanguage, although neither identical to the L1 or L2, shares characteristics of both. Elements of the L1 (or indeed of other languages), such as, for example, politeness rules and formulae, may be transferred to a learner’s interlanguage. The L2 is the target system which the transitory interlanguage is to approach, although this norm is generally not attained due to the fossilisation of particular non-target forms (cf. Selinker 1972:215), or to the possible inappropriateness of the L2 norm (cf. 3.4.2). A learner’s interlanguage is also characterised by autonomous features which tend to be common to all or most interlanguage systems. Such distinctive features mirror a learner’s understanding of the L2 system at a particular point in time. In other words, interlanguage operates according to an incomplete and developing hypothesis of appropriate L2 behaviour. Although systematic, it is also transitory in nature.

Viewed from the process point of view, the distinctiveness of the “product” interlanguage is the result of a number of overlapping influences or sources (cf. Selinker 1972:216ff), three of which have been found by Kasper (1981:435) to be of particular importance for interlanguage pragmatics. These are pragmatic transfer, mentioned above and also pragmatic overgeneralisation and teaching-induced errors.

These three issues are addressed below and examples are given of each (cf. 3.1.1–3.1.3). However, as will become clear here and also in section five, it is often difficult to identify the exact source of interlanguage specificity, since these may be multiple or difficult to identify empirically, as, for example, in the case of positive transfer and universal knowledge. In researching interlanguage pragmatics, explanations are thus necessarily of a tentative nature.

3.1.1 The L1 influence

In a comprehensive overview of the nature of pragmatic transfer, Kasper (1992:205) notes some disagreement among researchers regarding a definition of this basic concept. Following an extensive discussion, she builds on the working definition of language transfer put forward by Selinker (1969:86 *passim*) and suggests that pragmatic transfer be defined as:

...the influence exerted by learners’ pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information. (Kasper 1992:207)

This is the definition which is adopted in the present study. In the following, two major differentiations relevant to a discussion of pragmatic transfer are introduced, namely the differentiation between pragmalinguistic/sociopragmatic transfer and that between positive/negative transfer.

Pragmalinguistic/sociopragmatic transfer

Based on the distinction between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, Thomas (1983:99) differentiates between two types of pragmatic transfer, namely pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer. However, since Thomas concentrates on the negative outcomes of both types of transfer alone, the following more comprehensive definitions proposed by Gabriele Kasper will be adopted here. She describes pragmalinguistic transfer as:

...the process whereby the illocutionary force or politeness value assigned to particular linguistic material in L1 influences learners’ perception and production of form-function mappings in L2. (Kasper 1992:209)

Pragmalinguistic transfer thus refers to the process by which learners select certain strategies and forms from their L1 to transport into their interlanguage. The transported items affect the illocutionary force or relative politeness value of a particular utterance in a manner which may be either similar or dissimilar to the target norm.

Sociopragmatic transfer, on the other hand, stems from culturally differing perceptions of the importance of context-internal and context-external variables. It can be defined as:

...the influence of the social perceptions underlying language users' interpretation and performance of linguistic action in L1 on their assessment of subjectively equivalent L2 contexts. (Kasper Odense postgraduate seminar 1998, cf. also Kasper 1992:209)

This concept concerns learners' reference to their L1 perceptions of social relationships when deciding whether to perform a particular illocution or not, and in cases where the illocution is performed, it concerns their L1 assessment of how much politeness to invest.¹ Despite the clear distinction made between pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer in the literature, these two concepts are interrelated, as Kasper (1992:210) comments, and thus often difficult to identify in practice.

Positive/negative transfer

Positive pragmatic transfer can be defined as:

...the projection of first language-based sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge where such projections result in perceptions and behaviours consistent with those of second language users, ... (Maeshiba et al. 1996: 155)

Where the L1 and L2 exhibit similar pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic features not shared by all languages, and where learners adopt these features appropriately, positive transfer can be postulated. However, methodological difficulties may arise in the identification of positive pragmatic transfer, since where such similarities are shared by many languages, it is possible that a learner operating in an L2-appropriate manner is doing so due to the application of assumed universal general pragmatic knowledge rather than due to positive transfer (cf. 2.6.2.2 on universality). Such methodological difficulties and the fact that positive transfer generally aids rather than hinders communication — not making it a particularly urgent area of study — have led to a lack of research into this concept. As Kasper (1995b:4, 1997a) and Takahashi (1996:190) however note, learners often do not exploit universal knowledge or opportunities of positive transfer (the latter case termed non-transfer by Kellerman (1977:99ff)), as seen, for example, in a study by Robinson (1992) in which subjects were found to prefer direct, seemingly “more American”-type

utterances over polite Japanese refusal strategies despite the fact that pragmatic transfer would have been more appropriate in certain situations. In addition, as Zegarac/Pennington (2000: 169) note, positive transfer may not always lead to communicative success. Native speakers may, for example, view a learner's positive pragmatic transfer as an object of amusement if the learner's overall L2 pragmatic competence reveals a large number of learner-specific elements (cf. 3.4.2 for further details).

Negative pragmatic transfer, on the other hand, has been extensively documented in interlanguage pragmatic research. It has been defined by Maeshiba et al. (1996: 155), as:

...the projection of first language-based sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge onto second language contexts where such projections result in perceptions and behaviors different from those of second language users.

Interest in the concept stems from the evidence which such transfer provides of deviation from the L2 norm and from the associated potential for pragmatic failure, whether pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic in nature. However, although a possible cause of pragmatic failure, negative pragmatic transfer does not necessarily have a negative communicative effect — indeed, in some cases transferring elements of one's L1 into the L2 can have quite the contrary effect (cf. 3.4.2).

Studies in which negative sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic transfer have been found abound. Pragmalinguistic negative transfer has been found, for example, in pragmatic routines (cf. Eisenstein/Bodman 1993), in lexical and syntactic modification (cf. Faerch/Kasper 1989, Nikula 1996:209ff) and also in speech act realisation strategies.² Examples of pragmalinguistic transfer which impact on the illocutionary level as a result of both form and force being mapped in a non-L2-like manner are not particularly widespread. One example is when a pragmatic routine is translated literally from the L1 into the L2 (cf. Bodman/Eisenstein 1988: 12ff, Eisenstein/Bodman 1993, House 1993a: 171). More frequent are cases where the politeness level may be affected due to a learner's choice of strategies and forms in realising particular speech acts. Particular strategies may, for example, be used with greater or lesser frequency (cf., e.g., House 1989a:101, 1989b:321, House/Kasper 1987, Trosborg 1987, 1995). Also, L1-specific semantic formulae may be employed (cf. Beebe et al. 1990), or L1-methods of modification may be evident (cf. Faerch/Kasper 1989).

Turning to sociopragmatic negative transfer, three main areas in which a learner's L1 may influence his/her pragmatic comprehension/production in a non-L2-like manner include learners' evaluation of context factors (cf. Beebe et al. 1990, Nikula 1996), the overall politeness style — e.g., a positive or negative politeness orientation adopted (cf. Takahashi/Beebe 1993) — and the relative appropriateness of a particular speech act — Robinson (1992) reports, for example, that female Japanese learners of English feel anxious about refusing in English.

Pragmatic transferability

Despite the fact that research into how, why and when L1 features are transferred to an L2 has been conducted in the areas of syntax and semantics since the mid-/late-1970s (cf. Gass/Selinker 1994: 89, Takahashi 1993: 50), little is known about such transferability issues in interlanguage pragmatics due to a product-oriented concentration (cf. Kasper 1998b: 195).

Unlike the days of the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, SLA research on transferability currently takes a cognitive approach to transfer. Kellerman (1983), for example, views the learner as deciding for him/herself which forms and functions of the L1 are suitable for use in the target language. Kellerman finds three factors which affect transferability, namely:

- *psycholinguistic markedness*, i.e., whether a learner regards a particular feature as unique to his/her L1,
- *the reasonable entity principle (REP)* which involves learners' beliefs as to what is possible in the L2 system,
- *psychotypology* which represents learners' beliefs regarding the distance between the target language and another language, usually the L1.

In a study designed to test the effect of perceived language distance (psychotypology here) on pragmatic transfer, Fouser (1997) conducted a case study to investigate the Japanese of one highly advanced Korean learner of Japanese with intermediate proficiency in English as an L2, living in Sydney at the time. He finds the hypothesis that advanced learners make extensive use of pragmatic transfer in languages they perceive to be closely related, i.e. in this case, Korean rather than English, confirmed. However, in order to test whether language distance is indeed a factor influencing pragmatic transfer, it would be necessary to compare learners of the same L1 learning different languages, as was done, for example, by House/Kasper (1987). In this study, although not specifically designed to test Kellerman's theory, Danish learners were found to transfer more into German than into English; Danish being perceived as closer to German than to English. Finally, Cohen (1997: 149), in a report of his own experience of learning Japanese as a foreign language, tells of avoiding transfer of the apology strategy "*sumimasen*" (excuse me) for fear of committing negative transfer from more distant languages, such as his L1 and a variety of other languages.

Other interlanguage pragmatic studies which address the issue of transferability yield findings which reveal a link between perceived language specificity (psycholinguistic markedness above) and transfer. Olshtain (1983) examined apology realisations of learners of Hebrew with Russian or English as their L1 and also of native speakers of English, Russian and Hebrew. He found that English speakers felt that "... 'Hebrew speakers apologize considerably less than do English speakers'" (Olshtain 1983: 241 (original quote)) — as a result these speakers did not feel

compelled to apologise as much as they would in their L1. In addition, Robinson (1992) showed that Japanese speakers of English do not transfer indirect refusal strategies, viewing them as unsuitable. Results yielded by Takahashi (1993, 1996) are more complex. Takahashi (1993) investigates the transferability of five indirectness strategies from Japanese to English and finds language-neutral strategies to be transferred in some contexts, but not in others, and strategies which are perceived as being language-specific in some contexts, are found to be transferred in other contexts. Takahashi (1996), building on the results of this 1993 study, finds a relationship between the degree of imposition in a particular situation and the transferability of indirectness strategies.

As well as the cognitive factors discussed here, non-structural factors, such as L2 proficiency, learning context, length of residency and also social psychological factors, influence whether particular forms are transferred or not. These issues are addressed in 3.2.2, 3.3.2, 3.3.2.1.2 and 3.4.1.

3.1.2 Pragmatic overgeneralisation

Pragmatic generalisation involves “... *die Anwendung bekannter Funktionen/Formen auf neue Kontexte*” (...the application of familiar functions/forms to new contexts) (Kasper 1981:378), and overgeneralisation the ineffective generalisation of the interlanguage system.³ Overgeneralisation is, as Selinker (1972:217) proposes and, indeed, as empirical research has since shown, one of the central processes in the development of interlanguage knowledge. There appear to be three main sources of pragmatic overgeneralisation recognised in the literature: a strategy of least effort, a need for clarity and explicitness (“playing-it-safe” strategies) and finally, meta-linguistic motives. Each of these are briefly addressed in turn.

Strategy of least effort

According to Kasper (1981:383), this strategy causes learners, when creating a plan of communication, to select those forms and functions which are highly automated and easily produced. Consequently, a simpler form may be overgeneralised to cases where a more complex form is more appropriate. An example of a learner preference for syntactically uncomplicated expressions, and also for semantic transparency (i.e., a “playing-it-safe” strategy), is noted by Kärkkäinen (1992:206) in relation to learners’ overgeneralisation of the epistemic parentheticals “I think” and “I know” in favour of the use of modals or adjectives. Kasper (1981:374) also explains the realisation of a speech act with an over-explicit proposition with reference to the fact that explicit propositions are syntactically easier to produce than ellipses, for example.

Similarly, modality markers are often the victims of cognitive difficulties which may face learners in communication with native speakers. In such instances,

learners appear to concentrate first and foremost on the basic speech act. Modality markers, due to their lack of propositional content, may be regarded by learners as somewhat irrelevant and not necessarily essential in conveying information. Over-generalisation of the referential function of language is the consequence (cf. 3.2.3).

Need for clarity and explicitness: “Playing-it-safe” strategies

Due to their role as foreigners, learners are commonly burdened by a deep sense of insecurity which is mirrored in their interlanguage productions, especially in those of intermediate learners. In order to increase their confidence, they may adopt “playing-it-safe” strategies in which they strive for explicitness and clarity (cf. Faerch/Kasper 1989:245).⁴ A case in point is the preference for explicit rather than implicit modifiers which Nikula (1996:216f) reports of her group of Finnish learners of English. This preference contrasts with that of both groups of native speakers. Further examples are seen in research by Hassall (1997:285) who suggests that an over-use of want statements and an under-use of elided imperatives in requests is due to uncertainty, and also in Faerch/Kasper (1989:239f) who find their informants to overuse supportive moves in an effort to “play-it-safe”. Kasper (1981:373) also finds learners to overgeneralise their use of hearer-receipts, such as “oh” to signal their attention.

Metalinguistic motives

A further possible reason for overgeneralisation may be that learners are of the opinion that a particular form sounds target-like. They, thus, overgeneralise the use of this form, as learners of English may, e.g., do in relation to the starter “well” (cf. Kasper 1981:373). Blum-Kulka (1991:267), in a study of request realisations by forty-nine advanced learners of Hebrew, suggests that learners’ inappropriately high levels of directness may have been due to an inappropriate overgeneralisation of the stereotype of Israelis as universally direct. Another example is found in Kasper (1981:382) who hypothesises that the overuse of understaters and under-use of intensifiers found in her data is a reflection of what German learners of English believe is “*typisch Englisch*” (typically English).

3.1.3 Teaching-induced errors

Despite the positive opportunity which formal instruction may offer learners, it may also influence learners’ pragmatic competence negatively, in which case the term “teaching-induced errors” is employed. The main sources of such pragmatic errors have been found to be metapragmatic information, use of inappropriate teaching materials and textbooks and, finally, classroom discourse (cf. Kasper/

Schmidt 1996: 161). Each of these sources of difficulty is briefly discussed in the following with reference to a number of relevant studies. Let us start with metapragmatic information.

Metapragmatic information

An example of classroom metapragmatic input is seen in some of the verbal protocols elicited by Widjaja (1997:25) in a study of Taiwanese ESL learners' date refusals. I quote:

...in the U.S., I think you are free to express yourself more directly. I learned about this from friends who studied abroad and from Western English teachers in my hometown. These teachers told us that we could express our feelings, or likes and dislikes, directly in the U.S., yet we wouldn't be considered rude.

Although this metapragmatic information volunteered by a number of teachers may have some truth value, an analysis of learner date refusals using roleplay data found its content to have been overgeneralised by learners, their realisations having been found to be overly direct relative to the L2 norm.

Use of inappropriate teaching materials and textbooks

Bardovi-Harlig (2001), in a review of current studies in this area, shows that speech act realisations presented in textbooks may not reflect the manner in which native speakers commonly realise a particular speech act. A possible reason for such imprecision may be that such teaching materials, rather than being based on empirical research, are possibly derived from native speaker intuitions, themselves unreliable in nature (cf. Wolfson et al. 1989: 181f). In addition, a further source of teaching-error is the omission of details relating to a particular speech act or conversational function from a textbook (cf. Bardovi-Harlig et al. 1991).

Alternatively, although input may be correct, it may be presented in a manner which leads learners to draw incorrect conclusions. Hassall (1997: 154ff) claims, for example, that a possible explanation of the clear tendency of Australian learners of Indonesian to prefer "*boleh*" (may/be allowed to) over "*bisa*" (can) in query preparatory requests, where both forms or sometimes even just the "*bisa*" form are employed by Indonesian native speakers, may be that "*bisa*" is presented in the dialogues included in the learners' textbook to refer to ability only (e.g. in ability questions, such as "Can you speak English?"). It is not employed in requests — rather "*boleh*" appears in realisations of requests. Consequently, Hassall (1997: 155) concludes that learners have mistakenly decided that "*boleh*", not "*bisa*", is used to request, despite the fact that this is incorrect and has never been explicitly stated.

Classroom discourse

Instead of promoting the learning of L2 pragmatic features, classroom discourse may hinder the process. Despite some recent findings which appear to point to the contrary, it is teacher-fronted classroom discourse, characterised by Initiate–Response–Feedback (I–R–F) exchanges, which of all the various types of classroom organisation has been shown to be particularly limited as regards interactional input.⁵ Such a learning context reveals, as Kasper (1997a, 1997c: 124, 2000c: 396, 2001: 4) and Kasper/Rose (1999: 96) summarise, a narrower range of speech acts, a lack of politeness markers, shorter and less complex openings and closings, a monopolisation of discourse organisation and management by the teacher and, therefore, also a limited range of discourse markers. There is also a lack of opportunity to engage in communicative interaction (cf. Kasper 1989a). In addition, complete sentence responses, inappropriate propositional explicitness and a lack of genuine communicative function are common (cf. Kasper 1981: 422ff). Indeed, Nikula (1996: 200ff) notes that learners do not tend to view questions as an opportunity to express an opinion or to develop a conversation, but rather see them as questions to be answered with truths — as in the classroom. In other words, their utterances reveal difficulty in expressing interpersonal aspects of language. Hassall (1997: 284) also believes that rising intonation on a number of non-interrogative request forms — both at the end and within the individual segments — is a consequence of teacher-centred FL instruction (cf. also 3.3.1 on teacher talk).

3.2 Questions of development in learner pragmatics

In the following, the cognitive approaches to the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence proposed by Bialystok (1993) and Schmidt (1993) are described in brief (3.2.1), and a short overview is given of the output and interaction hypotheses proposed by Swain (1995) and Long (1996) respectively. While Bialystok's theory deals with the cognitive components to be mastered by the language learner and with their relative ease or difficulty, Schmidt's approach is concerned with the role of input in the development of pragmatic knowledge. Swain's (1995) output hypothesis and Long's (1996) interaction hypothesis, on the other hand, highlight the importance of output as well as input in the acquisition of a second language.

Other important issues in the development of L2 pragmatics concern the relationship between the development of L2 pragmatic competence and grammatical competence (discussed in 3.2.2) and the development of L2 pragmatic competence and input (discussed in 3.3.2.1.2), whereby input refers to both type of input and frequency of exposure. The exact nature of these relationships is, however, a complex issue, as is the interplay between proficiency and input — indeed, it is

undeniable that a neat differentiation between the effect of length of stay in the target speech community and the effect of increasing proficiency is difficult to achieve since frequency of exposure to input may produce a change in proficiency level (as highlighted in 3.3.2.1.1). Section 3.2.3 is devoted to an overview of what is known of the stages through which learners move in the development of their L2 pragmatic competence.

3.2.1 Theoretical approaches to L2 pragmatic acquisition

Bialystok (1993) puts forward a two-dimensional information processing model of pragmatic acquisition in which she claims that L2 learners have two separate tasks to complete — on the one hand, representations of pragmatic knowledge must be formed, while, on the other hand, control must be gained over processing, i.e., procedural knowledge must be developed. Since adult L2 learners have largely completed the former task of developing analytic representations of pragmatic knowledge thanks to L1 knowledge, the development of pragmatic knowledge is only a minor task, in Bialystok's view. It merely involving such tasks as the acquisition of linguistic knowledge, the formation of L2 form-function matches and the development of knowledge relating to potentially new social distinctions concerning age, sex, etc. Rather, the primary task for learners, she argues, is to gain control over the selection of knowledge. In other words, Bialystok claims that slow and inefficient retrieval of pragmatic knowledge is the primary reason for learners' use of pragmatically inappropriate L2 utterances.

Empirical evidence supporting Bialystok's theory comes from research which highlights learners' reliance on L1 or universal pragmatic knowledge (cf. 3.1.1). Such findings show that learners rely on previous representations of pragmatic knowledge in their use of the L2. As far as the importance of gaining control of L2 knowledge is concerned, findings by House (1996b) lend support to the importance of this cognitive component. She finds her learners to experience difficulties with responsive moves and explains this with reference to processing difficulties.⁶ However, Kasper (1993:67), referring, in particular, to research on sociopragmatic knowledge, is of the opinion that Bialystok underestimates the enormity of the learning task involved in developing pragmatic knowledge.

A further cognitive approach to the acquisition of pragmatic competence is put forward by Schmidt (1993). Schmidt takes up the issue of the importance of the role of consciousness in the development of L2 pragmatics, stating that there is no evidence for subliminal learning. He rather proposes that consciousness is a precondition of the development of pragmatic competence. In other words, learners acquire pragmatic competence by consciously paying attention to linguistic form, pragmatic function and sociopragmatic constraints. However, according to Schmidt, a language learner does not have to consciously attempt to notice gaps

between their own knowledge of the L2 pragmatic system and that of the native speakers of the L2, as it is consciousness as awareness rather than as intention which is the deciding factor. That is to say that learning may be intentional, but having an intention to learn does not necessarily imply that noticing will occur. Instead, learning may be incidental, i.e., learners may be forced to notice something in their input even if they do not intend to do so. An example of this latter type of learning are critical incidents.⁷ After “noticing a gap”, the next step is then to understand what has been noticed, i.e., to understand “how ... material is organized into a linguistic system” (Schmidt 1993:26).⁸

One of the widespread beliefs among students opting to study abroad is the belief that language learning happens by osmosis, i.e., that learning will automatically follow a stay abroad — effortlessly. Based on Schmidt’s approach, it appears that this folk theory may have some, albeit limited substance, if “effortlessly” is interpreted here as lack of intention rather than lack of awareness. Some evidence for the noticing hypothesis in interlanguage pragmatics comes from a study by DuFon (1999). Her six informants’ journals, kept over a four month study-abroad experience in Indonesia, reveal that features of address terms and greetings in the L2, Indonesian, were noticed — despite the fact that not all learners reached a level of understanding of differences noticed. We will come back to such and other difficulties associated with the process of “noticing the gap” between one’s L2 knowledge and L2 input in the acquisition of L2 pragmatics in 3.3.2.2.

Not only input, but also output, has received attention in the second language literature. Swain (1995), for example, in an article entitled “Three functions of output in second language learning”, suggests that output serves a conscious-raising function (in that learners are forced to notice non-L2-like elements of their output), a hypothesis-testing function and finally a reflective function, whereby learners reflect on L2 forms. In addition, procedural knowledge is also enhanced via practice. In this, and indeed other hypotheses, such as Long’s (1996) new version of the interaction hypothesis, communication is viewed as a platform for language acquisition rather than as a mere practice playground. Long’s hypothesis emphasises the importance of both input and output. It is proposed that negotiation with native speakers, or indeed with more competent interlocutors, may trigger acquisition. A lack of understanding of a more competent speaker’s output may encourage a learner to engage in negotiation, or alternatively, misunderstanding of learner output by a more competent hearer may trigger negotiation in pursuit of meaning. Negative evidence and modified output are the main channels of learning according to this theory.⁹

3.2.2 Grammatical competence — A prerequisite?

A learner’s level of grammatical competence may influence the degree of pragmatic

transfer found in his/her productions and also act as a constraint on the development of his/her pragmatic competence (cf. Kasper 1998b: 188). Let us first turn to the latter issue.

Grammatical constraints on pragmatic competence

There is evidence to suggest that the development of pragmatic competence is closely linked to that of grammatical competence, although the exact nature of the relationship is, as yet, unknown and although further research is required into the complex interaction, as recently advocated by a number of researchers, such as Bardovi-Harlig (1999a), Bardovi-Harlig/Hartford (1996: 184) and Kasper (2000b). In light of the well established fact that advanced learners are usually not completely competent in pragmatic issues, it is accepted that grammatical competence does not imply pragmatic competence. Further evidence for this analysis comes from research by Salsbury/Bardovi-Harlig (2001) who found that one particular learner, despite mastery of the modals, could not use these in a modifying manner (cf., also Bardovi-Harlig 2001, Kasper 2000b for further such findings). In contrast, the question concerning whether grammatical competence represents a necessary prerequisite for the development of pragmatic competence has been answered differentially. What follows is a brief look at two contradictory positions in this regard.

Let us start with the position that grammatical and pragmatic competence are independent entities, i.e., that although a lack of grammatical competence in a particular area may cause a particular utterance to be less effective, it does not necessarily represent a pragmalinguistic error. Studies which point to such a possibility include that by Schmidt (1983: 154 *passim*) who found his informant, Wes, to use pragmatic routines in a manner which showed evidence of pragmatic competence despite a low level of grammatical competence. In addition, Walters (1980), in an investigation of children's interlanguage productive speech act behaviour, established that appropriate politeness levels were used by the children, despite incorrect forms. Also, Olshtain/Blum-Kulka (1985: 304) show how grammatical deviance can accompany L2-like speech act realisations.

On the other hand, research has also shown that a lack of grammatical competence can restrict a learner's capacity to produce linguistic action. Indeed, Hassall (1997: 286f) claims in this regard that the complexification hypothesis, put forward to explain developments in interlanguage grammatical competence, also has explanatory value in interlanguage pragmatics. He notes that:

... while grammatical competence is not in itself sufficient for pragmatic competence..., it is likely to greatly constrain the development of pragmatic competence, such that the 'complexification hypothesis' will have considerable explanatory power for ILP acquisition as well. (original emphasis)

The complexification hypothesis claims that certain features, e.g., German word order and English negation, are acquired in line with a developmental principle. The order of development is stable and dependent on structural complexity and, therefore, on the degree of processing capacity necessary. According to this principle, those linguistic structures which demand a high degree of processing capacity will be acquired late; those requiring a minimum of processing capacity, early (cf. Clahsen et al. 1983:164 *passim*). Longitudinal research by Salsbury/Bardovi-Harlig (2000:62) is relevant in this regard. Here it was discovered that grammaticalised expressions of modality, such as “could” and “would” emerge later than other lexical forms, such as “maybe” and “think”, and that these stages of acquisition affected learners’ choice of expressions of modality in oppositional talk — learners, at first in the absence of complete control over the more complex forms, tending towards the easier lexical forms. In addition, Trosborg (1995), finding her learners to use internal modifiers to a larger degree with higher proficiency, and syntactic downgraders prior to lexical and phrasal downgraders (except where routines are concerned — as in the case of “please”, for example) also turns to the complexification hypothesis for an explanation.

Pragmatic transfer and proficiency — Friends or foes?

The effect of L2 proficiency on transfer and transferability is a contentious and complex issue in second language acquisition and, likewise, in interlanguage pragmatics. While there is evidence to suggest that increasing L2 linguistic proficiency results in a decrease in pragmatic transfer and an increase in overgeneralisation based on L2 rather than L1 knowledge, other research findings indicate that increasing L2 linguistic proficiency may trigger an increase in pragmatic transfer. In the following, we will look briefly at these contradictory findings.

Takahashi/Beebe (1987) advanced the hypothesis that an increase in proficiency leads to an increase in pragmatic transfer, since learners are no longer constrained by a low degree of L2 linguistic proficiency and can, thus, engage in pragmatic transfer as they wish and express their L1 intentions as they would in their L2. Negative transfer, in the case of such learners of relatively high proficiency, results then from a lack of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge. Possible evidence for this hypothesis is found in Cohen (1997:150), who, in a learner diary, tells of a wish “...to use more speech than Japanese do” and “...to be more specific, and reveal more about myself...” In other words, Cohen speaks of a wish to engage in negative pragmatic transfer from his L1, American English, to his L2, Japanese — a wish he was not able to realise due to a lack of proficiency. Likewise, Hill (1997:172) found a higher level of negative transfer in the conventionally indirect requesting sub-strategies employed by advanced learners of Japanese.¹⁰

On the other hand, Maeshiba et al. (1996), in a comparison of the degree to

which learners at different proficiency levels engage in pragmatic transfer, find the opposite trend, i.e. that an increase in proficiency leads to a decrease in negative pragmatic transfer. In other words, advanced learners, in contrast to intermediate learners, may avoid transferring particular forms which they could produce in the L2 given their linguistic proficiency, as they believe these to be pragmalinguistically or sociopragmatically inappropriate in the target language. On the other hand, somewhat more instances of positive pragmatic transfer among the advanced learners could also be identified (cf. Maeshiba et al. 1996: 168f). Similarly, Robinson (1992), in a study of refusal strategies by Japanese learners of English, also found changing perceptions of transferability to affect the degree of transfer. She found high proficiency learners, unlike low proficiency learners, not to transfer L1 refusal strategies, but rather to produce utterances with less mitigation — due to a belief that English is a more direct language — this, however, often resulted in pragmatically inappropriate utterances. Apart from changing perceptions of transferability, a further factor may be, as Hassall (1997: 156 *passim*) points out in relation to the lower level of transfer he finds among his more advanced learners of the modal verb “*bisa*” (can), that more advanced learners have a lower processing load than less proficient students, and can, thus, afford to attend to knowledge of transferability potential.

Yet another perspective is that offered by Takahashi (1996), who, in a study of learner requests, found familiarity with context to play a substantial role on perception of transferability and proficiency to have only a minimal effect.

3.2.3 The road to L2 pragmatic competence

Although no order of acquisition has been established for pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic elements and although researchers, such as Kasper/Schmidt (1996: 159), do not believe in the likelihood of such a fixed order, recent research findings do point to some patterns of development common to language learners.¹¹ The possible applicability of the complexification hypothesis for the development of pragmatic competence, as discussed in 3.2.2, is one such case in point.

On a general level, it has been suggested that competence in particular speech acts may develop relatively slower or faster than in other speech acts. Responding moves have been shown to be relatively complex by House (1996b: 248f) who illustrated difficulties experienced with this speech act within the framework of a longitudinal study over fourteen weeks (cf. also House 1995: 96ff, 1997b: 79f). The study compared the results of an explicit and implicit method of teaching pragmatic fluency to two separate groups of thirteen learners. While it was found that explicit teaching yielded better results than implicit teaching, both groups experienced problems with responding moves or *Contras*. House believes the explanation to lie in the fact that learners are cognitively overburdened in such a situation. She writes:

Prozedurales Wissen und prozedurale Strategien der Lerner sind dadurch überbeansprucht, daß sowohl rezeptive als auch produktive kommunikative Kompetenz im schnellen Hin und Her des gesprochenen Diskurses eingesetzt werden müssen. (House 1997b: 80)

(The learner's procedural knowledge and procedural strategies are overburdened by the need to employ both receptive and productive communicative competence in the quick back and forth movement of spoken discourse.)

In realising a responding move, such as in refusing, the learner not only has to decide what to say and how best to say it, s/he has also to understand his/her interlocutor's utterance, decide on an answer, assess the situation and, finally, decide how to formulate the required utterance, given the relevant constraints. Indeed, due to the relatively high degree of complexity associated with refusals, researchers, such as Kasper/Schmidt (1996: 159), propose that their successful performance is acquired late in both the L1 and L2, unless positive transfer occurs. In addition, Trosborg (1995) finds complaints to be relatively more complex to realise than requests and apologies. This she concludes based on an analysis of internal and external modification. She finds, for instance, that learners' use of external modification in complaints increases in an L2-like direction much later than for requests. Trosborg suggests that such difficulties may be partly due to the fact that complaints are conventionalised to a lesser degree than are requests or apologies — learners are, therefore, cognitively challenged to a larger degree (cf. Trosborg 1995: 430 *passim*).

In the following, the route which the development of L2 pragmatic competence is thought to take based on previous research findings is outlined in brief. Here longitudinal and cross-sectional studies in interlanguage pragmatics (cf. 2.6.3.2 for an overview) are the focus since these best shed light on such issues. Effects of learner proficiency on L2 pragmatic competence and indeed general stages of pragmatic development which have been identified are included here. For reasons of clarity, a range of pragmatolinguistic matters will be addressed initially and then sociopragmatic issues discussed, although, in reality, both are, of course, interrelated. Since the present study is one of the development of productive pragmatic competence, the focus is on those studies dealing with production issues.¹²

Pragmatic routines

The developmental path taken by pragmatic routines has been found to be non-linear. In a study by Bahns et al. (1986: 719f), increases in L2 knowledge were found to first cause learners to move away from target-oriented behaviour and towards creative, albeit sometimes pragmatically inadequate, verbalisations. The final stage, they predict, is learners' employment of routines in accordance with the target

forms, although their informants did not reach this phase in the limited time frame. Kecskés (1999: 304) also proposes three stages of development in the acquisition of routines similar to those proposed by Bahns et al., namely a period of strong L1-culture transfer, a period usually characterised by false generalisations, and a period during which things seem to fall into place.¹³

Strategies

In cross-sectional studies, beginners, intermediate and advanced learners have been shown to have access to the full range of apology strategies (cf. Maeshiba et al. 1996, Rose 2000: 47, Trosborg 1987: 164, 1995) — although Limmaneeprasert (1993: 25ff) finds proficiency differences, with beginners not found to master culture-dependent strategies. Cross-sectional studies have also revealed that beginners, intermediate and advanced learners use the full range of super strategies and most of the sub-strategies for requests (cf. Hassall 1997, Hill 1997, Rose 2000: 40f, Svanes 1992, Takahashi 1996, Takahashi/DuFon 1989: 10ff, Trosborg 1995), the full range of super strategies for refusals (cf. Takahashi/Beebe 1987) and also the super strategies for compliment responses (cf. Rose 2000). Longitudinal studies, however, contradict such findings. Ellis (1992: 12f) observed, for example, that the range of request strategies which the beginners in his case study were capable of producing was not L2-like in either the initial or final phases. However, he reports a gradual increase in the number of strategies employed with increasing linguistic proficiency, starting with mood derivable requests, followed by formulaic query preparatory requests, and moving to want statements (cf. Appendix 10.1 on these strategies). Performatives and hedged performatives did not occur at all, although this could be a product of the natural classroom setting. In other words, in the relatively early stages of foreign or second language learning or acquisition, learners, due to limited linguistic competence, may not have access to the forms for realising a wide range of strategies, but with increasing proficiency, these strategies will begin to be used without direction. A possible reason for their rather quick development is thought to lie in their proposed universal status (cf. Kasper 1997a).

More problematic than the development of such strategies is their distribution. With increasing proficiency, however, learners' preferences for macro-strategies become increasingly L2-like, although some differences appear to remain on a micro-strategic level. Trosborg (1995: 423f), for instance, found differences in request, complaint and apology realisations among three groups of Danish learners of English of different levels of proficiency compared to native speakers of English, but also differences between these learner groups, with a general tendency towards increasing native-like strategy realisations with increasing proficiency. She found that intermediate learners tended to realise request strategies in a direct manner by means of statements of obligation — a strategy not frequently employed by native

speakers — whereas advanced learners used the more L2-like imperatives. In addition, an overall increase in directness was recorded to occur with increasing proficiency in learners' complaint realisations and also further changes to occur with regard to individual strategies. A further study by Ellis (1992: 12f) found a clear L2-like movement from direct to conventionally indirect request strategies with time, as did also Rose (2000: 40f) in a recent investigation of the request strategies of Cantonese EFL learners and Code/Anderson (2001) in a longitudinal study of low-level Japanese EFL learners in a second language context. Similarly, Hill (1997: 171f), in the case of Japanese EFL learners' request realisations, found learners' indirectness to increase with proficiency and so become more target-like. He observed a definite development from direct (mainly imperatives) to conventionally indirect strategies with increasing proficiency, the latter which almost reached native speaker level, although the level of non-conventionally indirect requests remained lower than the L2-norm. However, on closer inspection, Hill (1997: 172) reports that there are large differences in the microstrategies employed by native speakers and learners — a finding he explains with reference to pragmatic transfer. Finally, Takahashi/Beebe (1987) found Japanese ESL learners' indirectness in realising refusals to increase with proficiency and so became more target-like.

Internal modification

Internal modification is discussed in detail in 4.4.1.3. What follows here is an overview of development issues only. We first look at internal modification in general before turning below to the individual types of internal modifiers, namely syntactic downgraders, lexical and phrasal downgraders and upgraders.

Previous longitudinal and cross-sectional studies carried out into the development of pragmatic competence have yielded some evidence that internal modification does not appear in learner language until quite a late stage due to a high degree of processing complexity (cf. 3.2.3). Ellis (1992: 12 *passim*), Rose (2000: 48) and Trosborg (1987: 164) have found, for example, that beginners make infrequent use of internal modification. Contrasted with external modification, Ellis (1992: 19) finds internal modification to develop first although Hassall (1997: 251) shows the opposite to be the case in his data. Hassall (1997: 200) explains that his finding may be partly due to the fact that there are no equivalents for important English modifiers, such as the politeness marker "please," in Indonesian.

With increasing proficiency, learners' use of internal modification usually moves towards the L2 norm (cf. Warga 2002a: 161f), although it does not reach the L2-norm — as shown by Trosborg (1987: 162 *passim*, 1995: 427). Indeed, that the L2 norm may not be reached is supported by Hassall (1997: 222) whose advanced learners seem to produce "... highly non-native ..." request modification — this he claims to be partly due to processing complexity.

Syntactic downgraders

Research on the development of syntactic downgraders suggests that their employment increases in line with proficiency. Ellis (1992:17), for example, found that neither of his two beginning level informants used “could”, the more polite form of “can”, in their realisations of requests for goods. In the intermediate and advanced learner stages, however, Trosborg (1995:247) found the same range of syntactic downgraders as were present in L2 requests.

Of the types of internal mitigation available, syntactic downgraders have been shown to appear first, due, Trosborg (1995:429) suggests, to their high frequency in pragmatic routines which makes them easier to learn. She notes, that while “could you” or “would you” form part of many common request routines, such as “I wonder could you...” or “Would you mind, if...”, lexical and phrasal downgraders do not. The “optional” nature of these latter internal mitigators thus makes them more difficult to acquire. A recent study by Salsbury/Bardovi-Harlig (2000) mentioned above, however, finds that low level learners tend to fall back on lexical modals, such as “think” and “maybe” in favour of grammaticalised means of expressing modality, such as “could” and “would” in oppositional talk due, they suggest, to the explicit nature of lexical downgrading. A possible reason for differences between Trosborg (1995) and this study may be the routine nature of many requests in contrast to oppositional talk.

Lexical and phrasal downgraders

The lexical and phrasal downgraders which occur in the early stages of language learning/acquisition are usually formulaic in nature, or form part of a formulaic utterance, and are propositionally explicit. The politeness marker “please” is a prime example. This downgrader, also a pragmatic routine, is furthermore syntactically easy to use. Not surprisingly, it is, as Ellis (1992: 12) notes, the first lexical and phrasal downgrader to appear in request realisations. This finding supports that of Dittmar/Terborg (1991:359) who find “*bitte*” (please) as an illocutionary force indicating device to emerge in L2 request realisations before “*bitte*” (please) as a politeness marker and both to appear before the downtoner “*vielleicht*” (maybe). Furthermore, Scarcella (1979a), in a cross-sectional study of ten beginners and ten advanced learners of English with Arabic as the L1, found that “please” was one of the first politeness features to appear with requests.

On the other hand, downtoners, a further type of lexical and phrasal downgrader, are acquired at a later stage in interlanguage performance (cf. reference to Dittmar/Terborg 1991: 359 above). They do not appear in formulas, but are rather optional elements (cf. Trosborg 1995:429), and, in the case of mitigating modal particles, lack propositional content (cf. 4.4.1.3.2 for a detailed discussion). Also downtoners are, relative to the politeness marker, for example, syntactically more complex to use as they are usually embedded in contrast to the politeness marker which can be placed extrasententially (cf. Trosborg 1995:429).

Upgraders

Beginning learners do not use the full variety of upgraders available for speech act intensification, according to Ellis (1992: 12) who observed that such learners only employed repetition or paraphrase in their request realisations. With increasing proficiency, however, it appears that the employment of upgraders becomes more L2-like, although the rate of development may be relatively slow — Trosborg (1995: 430) notes, for instance, that upgraders do not seem to be acquired as easily as downgraders in the speech act of complaining.

Apart from a limited range of upgraders used, further learner difficulties were noted by Bardovi-Harlig/Hartford (1996: 174) in the area of appropriate use. In a study of authentic academic advisory sessions they found that, unlike native speakers who did not employ upgraders in their realisations of suggestions, learners used upgraders with mitigators in the same situation.

*External modification*¹⁴

The range of external modification also varies between native speaker and learner speech. Ellis (1992: 12), for example, found external modification occurring in the initial stages of interlanguage requests to be limited to grounders, i.e., to justifications, explanations or reasons. At a more advanced stage of proficiency, Waga (2002a: 170 *passim*) found overrepresentation in the full range of supportive moves learners used with requests with the exception of the supportive moves “offers of request withdrawal” and “compliments”. This latter tendency may, however, have been a result of negative L1 sociopragmatic transfer.

Overall, it seems that external modification increases with proficiency. Beginners have been found by Ellis (1992: 12), for example, to use external modification infrequently with their requests, and to a lesser extent than internal modification, which is also very limited. Similar findings are also presented by Hassall (1997: 289) whose low-intermediate learners do not use external modification in requests, and also by Rose (2000: 43) who recorded a very low level of supportive moves among all three groups of Hong Kong primary school learners of English. Rose recorded an increase in external mitigation/adjuncts in the request, apology and compliment responses of the most advanced group relative to the other two groups of lower proficiency. Likewise, Trosborg (1995: 427 *passim*) and Waga (2002a: 169) found external modification to increase with proficiency.

Waffle, “... a direct consequence of learners’ over-use of ‘external modification’ or supportive moves” (Edmondson/House 1991: 274, original emphasis), has long been established as a common feature of interlanguage data, in particular of elicited written data, or non-interactional oral data, above all among intermediate and advanced learners irrespective of L1 (cf. Blum-Kulka/Olshtain 1986, Edmondson/House 1991, Faerch/Kasper 1989, Kasper 1989b). This “waffle phenomenon”, a

term coined by Edmondson/House (1991), relates, in particular, to learners' extravagant use of grounders (cf. Faerch/Kasper 1989:239, House/Kasper 1987:1281). Blum-Kulka/Olshtain (1986:174 *passim*), in a study of request realisations of students living in the target speech community, Israel, for various lengths of time, found that waffle appears to follow a straight line with regard to proficiency. In other words, linguistic constraints may prevent waffle in the early stages of language learning/acquisition — however, at the intermediate and advanced stage, such constraints no longer apply. Warga's (2002a) cross-sectional findings for foreign language learners would also support this developmental path. As Blum-Kulka/Olshtain (1986:177) note, learners' investment in waffle is explained by their primary concern with the effectiveness of their speech acts. However, in contrast to these findings, Hassall (1997:258 *passim*) finds intermediate learners to waffle, and beginners and advanced learners to approach the native speaker norm for supportive moves — suggesting a U-shaped curve of development related to linguistic proficiency. The difference in results in relation to advanced learners found between this study and that by Blum-Kulka/Olshtain (1986), Hassall explains with reference to the method of data collection — while the written situational description in the DCT used by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain encourages oversupport, the roleplay data Hassall himself employed suffers from such a “cue-card” effect to a lesser extent due to a greater need for negotiation. Hassall suggests that in the absence of this effect, it is only those learners most prone to verbosity due to a lack of confidence or to a desire to differentiate themselves from beginners, i.e. intermediate learners, who engage in over-support.¹⁵

Sociopragmatic development

Much of the research points to slow learner development in sociopragmatic competence relative to pragmalinguistic development, although this trend is not without exception. Bardovi-Harlig/Hartford (1993a, 1996), in a longitudinal study of academic discourse, find, for example, that learners gain an understanding of the appropriate choice of speech act — in this case suggestions, particularly self-initiated suggestions, rather than a previous preference for rejections — quicker than they do the appropriate means for its realisation. Bardovi-Harlig/Hartford (1996:174) note in this regard that “... knowing that one needs to do something (such as perform a particular speech act) is logically prior to knowing how to do that same thing”. It must, however, be noted that the appropriateness of suggestions was explicitly taught in this case, in contrast to the pragmalinguistic norms of modification, for example, which were only implicitly addressed. A further example of such development is seen in Schmidt (1983:154) where his informant, Wes, is reported to become “more American” in his choice of speech acts with time, realising complaints rather than remaining silent, for instance.

Other aspects of sociopragmatic competence do not, however, develop as quickly. Indeed, many researchers suggest that mastery of L2 pragmalinguistic elements of speech act realisations outperforms learners' sociopragmatic competence as regards the variation of speech act realisations to context. Indeed, Trosborg states:

Only when learners have acquired a wider range of communicative strategies and modificational devices can they begin to deliberately select strategies and markers according to the demands of the social situation. (Trosborg 1995:428)

Trosborg herself discovers that learners experience difficulty in varying modification, whether internal or external, in accordance with sociopragmatic parameters, with only the advanced learners showing such an ability, and even then, the L2-norm was not reached.

Rose's (2000:43f *passim*) findings also support Trosborg's. He finds students' mastery of pragmalinguistic elements of speech act realisations to outperform their competence in varying their realisations according to situational constellations. He finds, for example, that Cantonese learners of English tend towards universal use of conventionally indirect request strategies, failing to alter their linguistic behaviour in situations of high imposition and a high status differential. A similar lack of variation is recorded for their apology realisations. Likewise, Schmidt (1983:155) observed his informant not to be able to alter his speech act realisations in an appropriate manner to suit more or less formal settings, and Ellis (1992:14f *passim*) also found little discrimination between requests addressed to the teacher or researcher and those addressed to fellow-students, although he suggests that the classroom context may not have provided an appropriate setting for such variation.

In this regard it is interesting to note that Hill (1997:177) finds Japanese learners' assessments of factors, such as the right to make a request and the likelihood of compliance, to become less L2-like with time. Given that the Japanese L1 speakers' sociopragmatic assessments were closer to the English L2 norm than those of the learners, Hill surmises that learners' higher awareness of a lack of pragmatic competence has a negative influence on any desirable development towards the L2 norm.

A final issue relating to sociopragmatic competence is learners' possible resistance of L2 practices. Siegal (1995) found, for example, that with increased L2 proficiency, also came the ability and desire to resist L2 norms, in relation to the honorific style, for example (cf. also Cohen 1997). This issue is addressed in further detail in 3.4.

3.3 External factors — Input

Without input, language learning cannot take place — such is an undisputed fact in second language acquisition research and, indeed, the same may be said to apply

to interlanguage pragmatics. Unlike the case of second language acquisition, however, where linguistic debates have long raged regarding the role of input in second language acquisition, input in interlanguage pragmatics, has, to date, received only limited discussion.¹⁶ Yet, there can be no doubt, given the overriding importance of context in pragmatics, that the type of input to which learners are exposed is of primary importance in the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence.

In the following, the various types of input to which language learners are exposed are discussed (3.3.1). Following this, a characterisation of the study abroad context and of the opportunities which it has been found to offer for the development of learners' L2 linguistic and pragmatic competence is presented (3.3.2.1). Finally, the suitability of the second language context for pragmatically-appropriate input is discussed (3.3.2.2).

3.3.1 Learner-specific input

Although some types of input received by second language learners, such as input from the media, for instance, are identical to that received by native speakers, many other types are modified in order to increase the amount of comprehensible input available to learners. Ferguson (1971: 143ff) termed those simplified versions of the target language employed when communicating with non-native speakers, *foreigner talk*. In the case of speech acts, Schmidt/Richards (1980: 146) suggest, for example, that *foreigner talk* seems to have more explicit performatives than speech directed to other native speakers, in order to ensure that there is uptake of the illocutionary force.¹⁷

Broadly comparable to *foreigner talk* is *teacher talk* (cf. Gaies 1977) — the modified input which learners receive from the teacher in a classroom setting in the interest of comprehensibility. Such modification has been noted by Vorderwülbecke (1981: 149) in a study in which teachers were found to filter modal particles from their idiolect. Ohta (1994: 315) also finds that there are overall fewer types of affective particles employed in elementary Japanese foreign language classrooms than in ordinary conversation, irrespective of teaching style.

Learners are also more often exposed to interlanguage talk, i.e., to L2 input produced by other learners, than are native speakers. Not surprisingly, this register is less grammatical than others. As regards input on pragmatic and sociolinguistic issues, Kasper (2000b), after reviewing a number of studies in this regard concludes for pragmatics that "...through collaboration, learners can contribute building blocks to each other's individual knowledge". However, there is no doubt that interlanguage talk alone is insufficient. Porter (1986: 215ff), for example, found that learners' speech act realisations of expressing opinions, agreement and disagreement were different from native speakers', with politeness issues often disregarded. She concludes that while learners should not stop interacting with each other,

interlanguage talk alone is not sufficient in this area — instead contact with native speakers or explicit instruction is required.

3.3.2 Input and learning context

The context in which a language is learned determines to a large extent the amount and type of input to which learners are exposed and also the opportunities for output. Below, the study abroad learning context is characterised and previous research findings concerning the effect of this unique context on learners' L2 linguistic and pragmatic competence are discussed.

3.3.2.1 *The study abroad context*¹⁸

Increasingly often, students, especially language students, spend a term or more in a foreign country as part of, or in addition to, their program of study in the home university. In Europe, the Erasmus program is the principal scheme providing financial support to enable third-level students to study for an academic term(s) in a European country. Indeed, in 1998/1999, 24 countries, 1,600 universities and over 200,000 students participated in the program — the largest participation up to then of the European university community (cf. European Commission 1998).¹⁹ The students attend regular courses at their university/institute of technology and obtain credits in the subjects chosen. In addition, they often participate in language courses specifically designed for learners, or in translation courses. Accommodation, in Germany at least, is generally in university residences.

A further program in which many undergraduate students of German and also German undergraduate students participate is that of the *Pädagogischer Austauschdienst* (PAD) (language assistant scheme), within the framework of which students are placed in particular schools as language assistants. However, factors such as the learners' status as assistant teachers rather than as students, the location of many assistantships in comparatively provincial locations, differing accommodation arrangements and also differing input opportunities due to potentially reduced opportunities for socialising with native speakers of the target community, mean that the experiences of this group of students often diverge to a great extent from the Erasmus group.²⁰ Studies by Willis et al. (1977:85f) and, more recently, by Meara (1994), highlight the differing linguistic achievements of different sojourn abroad settings. For such reasons, only the study abroad context, is considered in the present study.

The traditional distinction between natural and educational contexts for the acquisition of a second language becomes blurred in the case of study abroad. On the one hand, study abroad includes two elements which differentiate it from acquisition in a natural context, namely a limited time-frame and an institutional framework (cf. Edmondson 2000:365). In other words, after the study abroad

period, learners return to the formal language learning context. In addition, the majority of students, whether foreign language students, or students of Engineering or Law, for example, will usually have acquired some prior knowledge of the target L2 via formal instruction in a language classroom in the home country, and will typically aim at increasing competence in the target language over time spent abroad. Furthermore, they usually attend language classes for learners in the target country. As a result, study abroad students, similar to learners who have been exposed to language in an educational setting only, view their target language for the most part as subject matter, i.e., as consisting of rules and principles which are to be attended to, rather than as a social entity.

On the other hand, however, these study abroad students are, nonetheless, exposed to the target language in its full social context during their year abroad, and the context of learning during this time is natural. As such, study abroad can neither be characterised as educational or natural. As Coleman (1997:4) notes: "Their [the study abroad students'] learning remains instructed, despite incorporating elements of naturalistic L2 acquisition". Instead study abroad is seen as representing a unique case of second language acquisition (cf. Freed 1995b:4).²¹

The common conviction that study abroad results in linguistic benefits is reflected in the large numbers of students who, each year, voluntarily or increasingly as an integral part of their undergraduate program, spend time in their target speech community (cf. Coleman 1998b, Interculture Project). However, research into such benefits of study abroad periods witnessed a long period of disinterest summarised by a comment by Freed (1990:459) as follows:

While the overall benefits of study abroad are widely acclaimed, ... there has been scant attention to the linguistic experiences students have while they are abroad.²²

Indeed, it is only in very recent years that a growth in such research and an increase in the awareness of the significance of this "...special case of second language acquisition..." (Freed 1995b:4) has been recorded.²³ Nonetheless, study abroad research remains rather narrow in focus, with the concentration remaining on elements of linguistic competence rather than on issues of use. Indeed, research into the effect of the year abroad on the development of pragmatic competence remains extremely sparse and rather varied despite the fact that a study abroad period represents one of the principal opportunities for learners to acquire such competence given the disregard of such matters in the classroom setting.

What follows is a brief outline of the principal current research findings on the impact of study abroad on L2 competence. An overview of those studies which are relevant in the present outline is given in Table 3.²⁴ Non-linguistic impacts, such as changes in students' attitudes, opinions and personal-growth are not discussed here.²⁵ We will start with an overview of research on the effect of the year abroad on

Table 3. Longitudinal/cross-sectional study abroad investigations^a

Study	Data	Informants (n)	L1	L2	Time frame, Place
Barron 2000a,b	2000a: FDCT, roleplay/retrospective interviews, post-year abroad questionnaire 2000b: DCT	students (33), Irish English NS (27), German NS (34)	Irish English	German	10 mths, Germany
Bicknese 1974a,b	questionnaire (self-report) (pre & post)	students (59)	American English	German	1 yr, Germany
Bielck 2002, in progress	roleplays, NS acceptability judgements, interviews	students (35) control: not abroad (20), English NS, German NS (data collection in progress)	German	English	6 mths-1 yr, UK/Ireland
Brecht et al. 1991, 1995 (ACTR/NFLC project)	variety of instruments: oral proficiency interviews (OPI), modern language aptitude test (MLAT), educational testing service (ETS) listening & reading tests, ACTR qualifying exams (proficiency)	1991: students (466) 1995: students (658)	American English	Russian	4 mths, Russia
Carlson et al. 1990 (SAEP)	educational testing service (ETS) self-appraisal method, ACTFL/ETS language proficiency oral interview (pre & post)	students (148) [includes students to UK], control: not abroad (153)	American English	French, German	France, Germany
Carroll 1967	MLA foreign language proficiency tests for teachers and advanced teachers, modern language aptitude test (short form) (MLAT), questionnaires	students (2,523): control group (not abroad) + stay abroad group	American English	French, German, Italian, Russian, Spanish	(not explicitly mentioned)
Churchill 2001b Code/Anderson 2001	notebook data DCT	high school pupils (47) high school pupils (25)	Japanese	English	1 mth, US
Coleman 1996 (ELPS)	C-Test, questionnaire	students (12,000) ^b	British English, Irish English	French, German, Spanish, Russian	10 mths, New Zealand/Canada
DeKeyser 1991	modern language aptitude test (MLAT), questionnaire regarding attitudes, grammar test, interviews (at 3 regular intervals), picture descriptions, fieldnotes	students (7), control: not abroad (5)	American English	Spanish	< 1 term — 1 yr, French-, German-, Spanish-, Russian speaking countries
Diller/Markert 1983	MLA Cooperative Foreign language tests of reading and grammar (pre & post)	students (14)	American English	German	6 mths, Spain
DuFon 1999, 2000	1999: naturalistic observations, learner journals, fieldnotes (participant observation), interviews, questionnaires, site documents 2000: naturalistic interactions, learner journals	students (6)	various: Caucasian Americans [NS of English] (3), Japanese-American [NS of English] (1), Japanese (2)	Indonesian (FL/SL)	3 mths, Germany
					4 mths, Indonesia

Table 3. (continued)

Study	Data	Informants (<i>n</i>)	L1	L2	Time frame, Place
Dyson 1988	listening tests, semi-structured oral production tasks (pre & post), self-reports (post)	students (229)	British English	French, German, Spanish	1 yr, France/Germany/ Spain
Edmondson 2000	self-evaluation (300 learner diaries)	students (300)	various	various	various
Fraser 2002	reading accuracy test (pre- & post-test of linking anaphora and cataphora with referents) & writing accuracy test (pre- & post-cloze test)	students (15–1 term), (15–2 term)	American English	German	1 term/2 terms, Germany
Freed 1990	motivation questionnaires, aptitude tests, Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT), College Entrance Examination Board Language Achievement Test (CEEB) (pre & post), the ILR-ACTFL oral proficiency interview (OPT) (pre & post), observation, self-reports (language contact profile, diaries, interviews)	students (38)	American English	French	6 wks, France
Freed 1995a	ACTFL/ILR oral proficiency interview (pre & post), assessments of motivations, anxiety, aptitude, written proficiency tests	students (15), control: not abroad (15)	American English	French	1 term, France
Hoffman-Hicks 1999	production questionnaire — open-ended questionnaire with dialogue to be written (greetings, leave-takings, compliments), pre-year abroad questionnaire, retrospective interviews Case studies: authentic data from social gatherings, oral roleplays	adults (14), French NS (25), control: not abroad (10)	American English	French	9 mths, France
Kaplan 1989	questionnaires (self-report)	students (39)	American English	French	6 wks, France
Kondo 1997	pre-year abroad questionnaire, DCT, assessment questionnaire	students (45), Japanese NS (48), American English NS (40)	Japanese	English	1 yr, US
Lafford 1995	oral proficiency interview (OPT) (open-ended questions, roleplays)	students (Mexico) (13), students (Spain) (16), control: not abroad (13)	American English	Spanish	1 term, Spain, Mexico
Lapkin et al. 1995	questionnaires (pre, on-site, post, including self-assessment items), diaries, pre & post language tests	adolescents (104)	Canadian English	French	3 mths, Quebec
Lauder 1993	oral performance of cognitively demanding tasks	students (3)	Irish English	French	1 yr, France
Lennon 1990	English language battery test (ELBA): (i.e., multiple choice test of grammar vocabulary, reading comprehension), picture sequences + judging panel (10 NS EFL teachers)	students (4)	German	English	6 mths, Britain

Table 3. (continued)

Study	Data	Informants (<i>n</i>)	L1	L2	Time frame, Place
Maiworm et al. 1993	questionnaire (self-reports) (pre & post)	students (3,263)	Spanish, Irish English, German, Greek, Italian, British English, Danish, Portuguese, Dutch, French, French/Flemish	Spanish, English, German, Greek, Italian, Danish	1 yr, Spain/Ireland/Germany/Greece/Italy/Britain/Denmark/Portugal/Netherlands/France/Belgium
Marriott 1995	oral proficiency interview (OPT) (pre + post), learning strategies inventory, diary, post-year interview (roleplay + picture description + interview)	adolescents (8)	Australian English	Portuguese, Dutch, French, Japanese	1 yr, Japan
Matsumura 2001	MCQ	students (97) control: not abroad (102) students (586)	Japanese	English	8 mths, Canada
Meara 1994 (Nuffield survey)	self-report questionnaire		British English	various	1 yr, various
Millon/Meara 1995	Eurocentres vocabulary size test (EVST), post-year abroad questionnaire	students (53)	German (26), French (16), Spanish (8), Italian (3)	English	6 mths, Britain
Möhle 1984	cartoon descriptions + answering questions (free discussion)	students (9) [French (3) (tasks 1 & 2), German (3) (task 1), (3) (task 2)]	French, German	German, French	1 term, Germany/France
Oppen et al. 1990 (SAEP)	self-reports (pre and post)	students (439)	British English, French, German, Swedish, American English	British English, French, German, Sweden, American English	1 yr, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Sweden, US
Raupach 1984	oral reactions to written questions (pre & post)	students (2)	German	French	1 term, France
Regan 1995	controlled sociolinguistic interviews (pre & post)	students (6)	Irish English	French	France, Brussels
Rivers 1998	pre & post educational testing service listening tests (ETSL) & educational testing service reading tests (ETSR) & oral proficiency tests & grammar tests	dormitory placements (2,224) homestay placements (285)	American English	Russian	1 term/1 year, Russia
Schauer 2001	DCT	students (15), control: not abroad at all / less than 3 mths (14)	German	English	9 mths, England
Siegal 1995, 1996	learner diaries, interviews, field observations, audiotaped authentic discourse, newspaper/magazine articles	1995: adults (2) 1996: adults (4)	English, Hungarian/German	Japanese	18 mths, Japan
Teichler/Maiworm 1997	self-evaluation	1988/89: students (9,330), 1990/91: students (25,835)	various (European Union)	various	1988/89: 6.2 mths = average 1990/91: 6.3 mths = average, European Union countries

Table 3. (continued)

Study	Data	Informants (n)	L1	L2	Time frame, Place
Walsh 1994, 1995	picture descriptions (<i>soziolinguistisches Erhebungs-instrument zur Sprachentwicklung</i> (SES)), follow-up interview, pre- & post-year questionnaires, correspondence	students (15)	Irish English	German	1 yr, Germany
Willis et al. 1977	test scores in speaking (situational responses, narration, message reading), listening, reading, socio-cultural knowledge test, personality measures, attitude questionnaire.	students (88)	British English	French, German	18 mths, French-/German-speaking country

^a In this table, ACTR/NFLC stands for the American Council of Teachers of Russian and the National Foreign Language Centre, SAEP for the Study Abroad Evaluation Project and ELPS for the European Language Proficiency Survey.
^b The total number of students involved in the ELPS project is as follows: From Great Britain and Ireland: 12,477 students of French, 3,824 students of German, 2,462 students of Spanish, 550 students of Russian; from Italy: 476 students; from Portugal: 618 students. An unspecified number of students from Germany were also included. In total, only 12,000 of these students — all from Great Britain and Ireland — were, however, included in the analysis of the year abroad (cf. Coleman 1996:28 *passim*).

L2 linguistic competence given its importance for pragmatic competence as outlined in 3.2.2. As a final step then, issues of pragmatic competence addressed in study abroad research are presented in Section 3.3.2.1.2. It will be shown that the widespread assumption that study abroad necessarily leads to an improvement in L2 competence must be revised and focused.

3.3.2.1.1 *Acquiring L2 linguistic competence studying abroad.* Here the focus is first on research pertaining to global linguistic proficiency followed by a closer look at the particular elements which make up linguistic proficiency. It should be noted here that test scores, such as the oral proficiency interview (OPI), and also self-reports, were popular instruments in early study abroad research. However, the use of test scores has been questioned due to the lack of qualitative changes in linguistic proficiency and also due to the failure of such tests in identifying progress in advanced students' level of proficiency (cf. Brecht et al. 1991, 1995, Freed 1995b:9, 1998: 35 *passim*). In addition, the subjective nature of self-reports places a question over the reliability of this instrument (cf. 4.1.1.2, endnote 17). Although more recent studies have begun to adopt more objective measures, these caveats should be kept in mind in the following overview.

Overall proficiency

Language proficiency has been shown to benefit overall from the study abroad experience. Research using test scores, such as the ongoing study by Brecht et al. (1995), for example, found the global proficiency of American students of Russian who spent time abroad to be more likely to reach a higher level of proficiency than those who did not have such an experience. Similar results were also yielded by Carroll (1967) who also employed test scores.

These findings are supported by subjective data from various studies. Maiworm et al. (1993) revealed, for example, that study abroad students believed that the period abroad had led to a substantial increase in their overall L2 proficiency, as did informants in the Study Abroad Evaluation Project (SAEP) — Oppen et al. (1990) comment that in this project, on average, over three-quarters of the 1984/1985 study abroad students from all sending countries analysed felt that the gains which they had made in foreign language proficiency had made their stay abroad “... *extremely worthwhile*...” (Oppen et al. 1990: 115, original emphasis). A further self-evaluation study by Teichler/Maiworm (1997: 132ff) requested students to indicate on a rating scale of 1 to 5 how worthwhile particular aspects of their Erasmus study abroad period had been. They found that foreign language proficiency was one of the three most positively assessed outcomes of study abroad.

Grammatical correctness

Research on grammatical correctness as a result of time spent in the target speech community has yielded differing results. On the one hand, a study by Diller/Markert (1983:226), for example, reports of increases in grammatical test scores for students of German while, on the other hand, research by DeKeyser (1991) found no significant differences in grammatical competence for a study abroad and a control group. Likewise, Möhle (1984:40ff) investigated the grammatical competence, measured by frequency of mistakes or length and syntactic complexity of sentences of German learners of French in France and of French learners of German in Germany. While the learners of German improved considerably, particularly with regard to inflections, no obvious changes were identified in the grammatical competence of the German learners of French. Possible reasons for the differences in findings relate to the lower proficiency of the French students or to the high degree of inflections in German. Finally, Walsh (1994, 1995) showed that a year abroad did not necessarily lead to increases in oral grammatical competence; morpho-syntactic developments noted being dependent on individual factors. Overall, then it appears that the study abroad period may lead to increases in grammatical competence but that such increases depend on individual factors and potentially also the level of proficiency or language in question.

Lexical development

Studies on the effect of a sojourn in the target speech community, such as those by DeKeyser (1991) and Milton/Meara (1995), find that learners extend their vocabulary over time, Milton/Meara (1995:26) noting this development with low proficiency students in particular.

Writing/reading

Overall, L2 writing and reading skills do not appear to benefit as much from study abroad as other aspects of L2 competence, such as oral/aural skills. On the positive side, results by Oppen et al. (1990:105f) showed increases in both reading and writing skills, albeit self-evaluated. Equally positive and somewhat more objective were the encouraging findings by Fraser (2002) who employed a cloze test to measure accuracy gains in writing skills and a reading test designed to test students' ability to match anaphora and cataphora to their referents. On the other hand, however, research by Dyson (1988:19) and Meara (1994) revealed only limited advances in the skills in question. Kaplan (1989:297), in a self-report study on the nature and extent to which American French students used their L2 on a six-week exchange program, points to a possible reason for the relatively low degree of progress in writing he recorded, namely that "Writing ... played virtually no role outside of the classroom".

Oral/aural competence

Overall, oral and aural skills have been shown to benefit extensively from time spent in the L2 speech community. Meara (1994), for example, found that the majority of participants considered their oral and aural skills to have improved over time abroad, as did most of the participants in the study by Lapkin et al. (1995). Brecht et al. (1995) also find that study abroad improves the spoken proficiency of students of Russian. Weaker students, in particular, are found to benefit from the study abroad experience according to a self-report study by Dyson (1988:19) and Oppen et al. (1990:100ff). A study by DeKeyser (1991) represents the exception, not finding any differences in oral proficiency between students who had been abroad and students who had not.

Oral fluency

Although a prevalent term in lay-speech, fluency is an ill-defined and complex concept in second language research (cf. Freed 1995a:127). Fillmore (1979:93) proposes four criteria for fluency, namely the ability to talk at length with few pauses, to talk in a coherent and rational manner, to have something to say in a wide range of circumstances and to be innovative and creative in one's use of language. However, common measures of fluency in study abroad investigations are rather narrower, often encompassing such factors as speech rate (i.e., number of syllables per second), length and position of unfilled pauses, length of fluent speech runs between pauses, frequency and distribution of filled pauses, frequency of repetitions and self-corrections, proportion of total time spent speaking, use of appropriate routine formulae and compensatory communication strategies which lend a "native-sound" to learner-speech (cf. e.g., Lafford 1995, Laudet 1993, Lennon 1990:409ff, Möhle 1984:43ff, Raupach 1984).

It is widely believed that study abroad leads to an increase in fluency, and indeed many findings would seem to confirm this suspicion. DeKeyser (1991), for example, finds students in a study abroad context to be more fluent than those who remain in the foreign language context, and Lennon (1990) reports native speaker judges to rate students' oral fluency after time in the target community higher than before. In addition, Laudet (1993), in a study of students' oral performance of tasks of different cognitive difficulty, found that time abroad facilitated faster processing of the L2 and also that L2 productions became more fluent. Furthermore, Möhle (1984:44) found that German students' fluency in French improved as a result of a stay abroad, a finding Raupach (1984) showed to be related to the learners' substitution of formulas for hesitation devices as safety islands to provide them with time to further plan their speech.

On the other hand, however, many researchers, such as Coleman (1997:15) and Edmondson (2000:369), observe that learners' increased fluency may not reflect an underlying native speaker competence. It may happen, for example, that while

learners may begin to sound more native speaker-like, using linguistic features of their L2 more readily, they may not use these features as speakers of the L2 do. Edmondson (2000: 369) refers to a study by Regan (1995) in this regard, where it was found that while Irish learners increased their competence in the omission of “ne” in French when negating, they overgeneralised this omission and so failed to acquire sociolinguistic competence in its use.

3.3.2.1.2 Acquiring L2 pragmatic competence studying abroad. Kasper (1997a), in a recent article concerned with the teaching of pragmatic knowledge, argues that authentic native speaker input represents the only reliable source of knowledge of pragmatic issues for learners. However, many foreign language teachers are themselves learners and the amount of descriptions of pragmatic issues available is limited in many languages. In addition, sparse attention has been paid to pragmatics in foreign language teaching (cf. 1) despite recent findings that L2 pragmatics can, to a certain extent, be taught either implicitly — or for better results — explicitly.²⁶

Consequently, it can be suggested that Kasper, in supporting authentic native speaker input for the teaching of pragmatics, indirectly supports a natural context for the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge, at least at present. Indeed, Kasper/Schmidt (1996: 159f) lend further support to the natural context for acquiring competence in pragmatic issues. They write:

Because pragmatic knowledge, by definition, is highly sensitive to social and cultural features of context, one would expect input that is richer in qualitative and quantitative terms to result in better learning outcomes. A second language environment is more likely to provide learners with the diverse and frequent input they need for pragmatic development than a foreign language learning context, especially if the instruction is precommunicative or noncommunicative.

In addition, a number of researchers have highlighted the suitability of the SL context for the learning of particular aspects of pragmatic competence, such as pragmatic routines. Wray (1999: 226), for example, proposes that since formulaic language is tied to the demands of communication, interactions with native speakers will foster its development in foreign language learners whose speech has been shown to be characterised by a lack of idiomaticity. Also, House (1995: 93) notes that pragmatic routines can only be properly understood “... *in ihrem sozio-kulturellen Verwendungszusammenhang*...” (...in their socio-cultural context of use...), and Edmondson/House (1991: 285) suggest that a stay in the target speech community will lead learners to achieve greater confidence in pragmatic routines and, thus, to use a greater amount of such routines.

Since study abroad research on the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence is limited, the following overview of what is known of the suitability of the study

abroad context for the development of L2 pragmatic competence also draws on findings of studies which focus on the effect of a second language vs. a foreign language context.

Contrasts between the second and foreign language context generally highlight the superiority of the second language context for the acquisition of pragmatic issues. A study by Kitao (1990: 201), for example, found ESL learners' assessments of the politeness of request strategies to be more L2-like than those of EFL learners. Also, Kasper (2001: 19f), who gives an overview of a number of studies focusing on the differences between the potential of the FL/SL context, concludes that SL teaching appears to have a greater potential for developing pragmatic ability. Finally, a study by Bardovi-Harlig/Dörnyei (1998) compared the grammatical and pragmatic awareness of 201 ESL teachers and learners of fifteen different L1s living in the United States with 507 Hungarian and Italian EFL teachers and learners. They found that both ESL teachers and learners gave pragmatic errors more weight than grammatical errors, whereas both EFL groups did the opposite. Bardovi-Harlig/Dörnyei (1998: 256) explain the deficit of pragmatic competence in EFL participants with reference to a possible lack of input and also to an overemphasis on grammatical issues. However, a recent replication of this study by Niezgoda/Röver (2001), shows that environment may not be the only factor influencing the development of pragmatic awareness — individual factors possibly playing an important role in relation to the level of informants' awareness of pragmatic input.

The advantages of the second language context relative to the foreign language context are also reiterated by current study abroad research which shows the second language context to be an ideal setting for foreign language learners to increase their L2 pragmatic competence in a number of key areas. However, developments away from the L2-norm are also recorded, as seen in the following.

Pragmatic routines

Röver (1996), in an investigation of German university EFL students' competence in pragmatic routines, found students who had spent time abroad to have a higher mastery of pragmatic routines even if the stay abroad had been as short as six weeks. He leaves the question open as to whether this positive development is due to the second language context or to the general dismissal of routines in the language classroom. However, research by House (1996b: 245) would suggest that context may be the main reason since she, reporting on the results of a foreign language teaching course on pragmatic routines, finds students who had spent time in the target culture to be superior to those who had not both before and after the course, a finding confirmed by Schauer (2001) who compares realisations of gratitude and responses to gratitude by students who had spent an extended time in the target speech community with students who had not. Also, a study by Marriott (1995) of low proficiency students over a year spent in Japan established that learners'

competence in the production of appropriate formulae in the opening and closing sequences of an interview and roleplay improved over time. Likewise, Hoffman-Hicks (1999) found that American learners of French produced shorter and less frequent — and thus more L2-like — greetings with time on a stay-abroad experience. In addition, Kecskés (1999:304), in an investigation of the reception and production of pragmatic routines by foreign language students of English, finds that the use of pragmatic routines by learners living in the target speech community for one year or under is generally characterised by strong L1-culture transfer. After a period usually characterised by false generalisations, learners who have been in the target speech community for over two years typically develop a use of pragmatic routines often similar to that of L2 speakers. Finally, Raupach (1984) found German students of French to increase their ability to use formulas over time spent in the target speech community — a finding which triggered increases in fluency (cf. also 3.3.2.1.1).

Strategies

As far as request realisations are concerned, Churchill (2001b), in a study of lower level Japanese EFL learners during an exchange program, recorded a decrease in direct request strategies and an increase in conventionally indirect strategies. This finding supports preliminary research by Code/Anderson (2001) who tell of the same trend among a similar group of lower level Japanese EFL high school students over ten months spent in the target speech community.

Internal modification

Although it may be expected that exposure to spoken input over the year abroad would cause the interpersonal function of language, realised partly by the mitigating modal particles, and often disregarded in the foreign language classroom, to become activated as never before, a study by Weydt (1981) found otherwise. His hypothesis that modal particle use and time spent in Germany by learners of German would be positively correlated was rejected. However, Weydt (1981:165f) emphasises the fact that this was a pilot study with several deficits. His informants came, for example, from a variety of L1 backgrounds, his sample was too small, incorrect particles were treated as positive values, and there was no information regarding intensity of contact with Germans while abroad, or how long ago the stay abroad had been. Nonetheless, Code/Anderson (2001) also report of a decrease in the frequency of downgraders employed by their Japanese EFL high school students in request realisations over a ten month sojourn. However, an increase in downgrader combinations and variety of downgraders was established.

External modification

As far as developments in the use of external modification are concerned, Blum-Kulka/Olshtain (1986: 177) find that the relationship between length of stay in the target speech community and degree of waffle is more positive than that between L2 proficiency and waffle, with the latter representing a straight-line relationship and the former a U-shaped curve — although it should be remembered that research by Hassall (1997) which suggests a U-shaped curve to describe the relationship between proficiency and waffle questions this finding (cf. 3.2.3). Nonetheless, as far as the second language context is concerned, L2 productions were shown to become increasingly L2-like with length of stay in the target speech community — after between five and seven years abroad, they were found to approach native speaker norms. Research by Kecskés (1999) provides further support for the U-shaped development curve in the SL context. Kecskés (1999: 304) observed verbosity to characterise the learner data of beginners, and comparatively short answers those of advanced students who had spent one or two years in the target speech community, in this case, the United States. In addition, Churchill (2001b) recorded an increase in grounders in the request realisations of lower level learners after one month in the target speech community. Churchill's results were not, however, compared with a NS control — whether waffle is at play in either case cannot, thus, be determined.

Sociopragmatic competence

Year abroad studies relating to the development of sociopragmatic competence are rare. However, a study by Matsumura (2001) which focuses on Japanese EFL learners' perceptions of appropriate realisations of offering advice finds that quite early in a sojourn abroad students selected more appropriate realisations when offering advice to status equals or to people of lower status than did students who had not spend time in the target speech community. This development is explained with reference to SL input.

Turning to the issue of pragmatic transfer, it seems, in general, that a higher degree of negative pragmatic transfer can be expected in the foreign language learning context. An investigation by Takahashi/Beebe (1987) on Japanese low and high proficiency EFL and ESL learners' refusals reveals, for example, that although pragmatic transfer could be identified in both groups, more L1 pragmatic features were likely to be transferred in a foreign language context than in a second language context, not least because of the all-pervasive influence of the L1 in the foreign language educational context (cf. also Maeshiba et al. 1996: 181f).

As regards the effect of a sojourn abroad on pragmatic transfer, it appears that even if the time in the SL context is short, pragmatic competence is nevertheless affected, albeit in varying ways. Churchill (2001b) recorded a decrease in direct want statements in the English request realisations of his JFL learners over a month in the target language context. He explained this reduction in terms of a decrease in

transfer — want statements are often used in Japanese with a final particle where they realise a conventionally indirect request. Kondo (1997), in a study which examined the development of apology performance in Japanese learners of English during a year's stay in the US yielded complex results with mainly decreases in pragmatic transfer recorded. However, an increase in pragmatic transfer was recorded with regard to particular strategies. This points to the fact that changes in interlanguage pragmatic competence may not always be towards the L2 norm. Kondo (1997:283) suggests that the undesirable developments in pragmatic transfer may have been due to an increase in linguistic competence or to personal development having triggered more caring strategies.

3.3.2.2 *Pragmatic input in a second language context*

Notwithstanding the advantageous nature outlined above of a natural context for the acquisition of pragmatic issues, and the widespread assumption underlying all study abroad programs that the large amount of input available to students and the many opportunities for L2 output will automatically lead to a higher level of L2 competence (as learners are afforded an ideal opportunity to both formulate and test hypotheses about language (cf. DeKeyser 1991:116)), it has been shown that, in reality, appropriate input is not guaranteed by a second language context for a number of reasons. Let us turn to the first of these reasons, namely the context, in this case, the special context of study abroad.

Study abroad context

A basic problem with accessing appropriate input in the study abroad context is that it is often difficult for year abroad students to establish contact with native speakers of the target L2. This is especially so in third level institutions such as those in Germany, which, as a consequence of the individualistic system, are relatively anonymous. In addition, groups of students of the same L1, often friends, engage on a study abroad period. As a result, learners frequently socialise with other study abroad students of the same L1, and indeed also with learners of other L1s, who they meet in the target speech community in language classes designed for study abroad students. A recent discussion on the German-Studies mailing list on assistantships observed this problem of study abroad programs (summary of discussion by Elizabeth Boa, 17/12/1999), as did also Maiworm et al. (1993:127). Indeed, the latter researchers found that the third most serious problem raised by 3,263 of the 1990/91 Erasmus students, after accommodation and financial matters, was too much contact with individuals from the L1 culture (20%). Nonetheless, such contact with L1 speakers has both negative and positive elements. On the negative side, even if students speak to each other in the target language, the large amount of interlanguage talk means that the potential for developments in L2 competence may not be fully exploited (cf. 3.3.1). On the positive side, however,

contact with L1 speakers may play an important role in learners' adjustment to the target culture by helping to reduce possible culture shock (cf. 3.4.1 on culture shock and also Alptekin 1983:820, Wilkinson 1998a:30ff on this point).

In addition, access to native speakers alone is not sufficient — rather communication must also take place, and appropriate opportunities for input and practice must be available. Rivers (1998), in a study which compared the home-stay environment and the student accommodation setting highlights this issue. He found that the home-stay environment, which would seem to provide more access to native speakers, only led to a relatively larger gain in reading — in speaking and listening, proficiency gains were lower than in the student setting due to a lack of communication with the host family. In other words, the native speakers were mostly available in theory only — a finding also shown in relation to host peers in Churchill's (2001a) needs analysis of an American home-stay environment.

Assumed universality of pragmatic behaviour

Even if appropriate input is available in a natural context, it cannot be assumed that learners will benefit from it. Indeed, Gass (1997:20) states that:

[Pragmatic behaviors] are often areas that learners do not readily recognize as differing cross-linguistically or cross-culturally. Rather, deviations in the area of pragmatics are often seen as negative reflections of individuals or of groups of people.

In other words, learners may be blinded by the supposed universality of pragmatic behaviours, and may, thus, not be open to pragmatic differences. Cf. also 3.2.1 on Schmidt's noticing hypothesis.

Type, source, availability and value of input

Even with access to and communication with native speakers, appropriate input is not always available in the target language context. A longitudinal study by Bardovi-Harlig/Hartford (1993a, 1996), for example, examined the development of adult learners' and native speakers' pragmatic competence in the institutional context of an academic advisory meeting. They found that while their native speaker informants learned the rules of the advisory session — their pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence in this context developing with time — only the sociopragmatic competence of the learner informants improved. The reason for such differences relates, in part, Bardovi-Harlig/Hartford (1996:175) suggest, to the type and source of input available. While sociopragmatic issues were explicitly addressed by advisors asking for suggestions, and indicating what content suggestions, and to a lesser extent rejections, should take, pragmalinguistic features, such as the use of mitigators, were not explicitly addressed by advisors despite being available in the input. In addition, it is suggested that the source of input may play

an important role in this study, as learners may not identify a particular interlocutors' input, such as an advisor's input, as relevant to their needs. However, input from learners' peers, a source of input viewed as relevant by learners, is, as Bardovi-Harlig/Hartford (1996: 184f) note, often limited in the case of suggestions and rejections. Results by Kasanga (1999:97), in a longitudinal case study, however, contradict these findings concerning the relevance of advisors' input (despite a claim to the contrary) since Kasanga finds an L2-like increase in indirectness in requesting over time to characterise the pragmatic competence of one of his graduate students. He claims this development to have been triggered by himself, a lecturer. He states:

It is reasonable to conclude that exposure to proper pragmatic input in the target language does have a beneficial effect on the development of pragmatic competence. The subject's exposure to the request strategies I [Kasanga] had used over a period of time resulted in a significant improvement in her use of these strategies.

Apart from the importance of the type of input, explicit or implicit, and the subjective relative relevance of the source of input, previous research also points to the problem that appropriate input may not always be available to the learner in the second language context. Marriott (1995), for example, investigated the acquisition of politeness norms of eight secondary school low level proficiency Australian students of Japanese who spent a year in the target speech community. She found that those learners who had employed the polite honorific style to a limited extent, and with difficulty, prior to the year abroad, overused the plain style following their year abroad. Although the concern here is sociolinguistic rather than pragmatic, the study is of relevance in the present discussion of input since Marriott (1995:217f), apart from referring to negative transfer, explains that the difference is due to the fact that students in a home-stay environment are mostly exposed to the plain style rather than to the polite style as the former is predominantly employed in families and among good friends. In addition, in situations where stylistic variation is expected, the polite style is non-reciprocal — in other words — although students are expected to use the polite style towards superiors, such as teachers, these seniors use the plain style towards them. As a result, input and output opportunities of the polite style are limited. In addition, negative feedback was limited, a finding Marriott (1995:218) compares to the infrequency with which grammatical errors are corrected by native speakers when the message content is understood (cf. Schmidt 1983:166). A related study in this regard is a further sociolinguistic study by Regan (1995) where the non-prestige form of negation in French is found to be overgeneralised following a year abroad in the target speech community. Regan (1998:72f) suggests minimal contact with users of the prestige form, such as university lecturers, as an explanation for this development. Also relevant in the

discussion of availability is the special situation of the language learner in a second language context. Kasper/Zhang (1995: 16), for example, note that Chinese native speakers treat foreigners differently to the way they treat their fellow Chinamen/women, complimenting them to a much greater extent, for example. Exposure to Chinese native speaker norms of complimenting is, therefore, limited.

Finally, the value of the input learners receive may be limited by the learners' level of grammatical competence. Bardovi-Harlig/Dörnyei (1998) note, for example, how one learner only knew "could" as a past tense realisation and did not realise that it could also be employed as a modality marker.

3.4 Individual differences

Given the same learning environment, there will be successful and less successful language learners, just as some foreign language learners will profit more from a stay in the target speech community than others.²⁷ It is to be assumed, given individual levels of L2 pragmatic competence, that individual factors also play a role in interlanguage pragmatics. Indeed, Hassall (1997: 259 *passim*) found confidence levels and propensity to engage in risk-taking to influence the stage in L2 pragmatic development in which individual learners engaged in over-supportive behaviour. Also, Niezgoda/Röver (2001) suggest that individual factors influence relative awareness to pragmatic input whether in an EFL or ESL context. Further research on the influence of individual variables on L2 pragmatic competence is, however, required as such research is still in its infancy (cf. Kasper/Rose 1999: 97).

In the following, I focus exclusively on social psychological factors affecting the development of L2 pragmatic competence. The particular focus is on culture shock, which according to Coleman (1997: 9), appears to be "... a crucial factor in residence abroad" (3.4.1). Following this, the appropriateness of an L2 pragmatic norm for language learners is discussed (3.4.2).

3.4.1 How rude can you get? — Culture shock in L2-land

Study abroad presents students with possibly their first extended opportunity to become acquainted with the L2 culture. With this opportunity, there also, however, comes the difficult challenge of overcoming psychological barriers, as learners gradually begin to realise that the norms of their own culture are relative rather than absolute, and that different cultures have different beliefs and values. The process of acculturation, i.e., "... the process of becoming adapted to a new culture" consists of four stages (Brown 1986: 33), the second stage of which (culture shock), is particularly painful (cf. Brown 1986: 35, Furnham 1993: 94ff, Paige 1990: 166f). Culture shock stems from a sense of disorientation as a result of confrontation with

new belief and value systems. It manifests itself in feelings of uncertainty, dissatisfaction, annoyance, irritation, misery, depression, discontentment and a longing for home. Although affecting different language learners to different degrees of severity, culture shock is an inevitable phase of acculturation and, indeed, foreign language learners, largely shielded in the L1 context from cultural differences, suffer its effects in their early stages in the L2 environment. Wilkinson (1998b:28), for example, reports of a student remarking "...French people are so obstinate!" (original emphasis) following an experience of differences in customer status in the French context. Schumann (1978:266) identifies culture shock as one of four principal factors leading to psychological distance (i.e., the level of difference which a learner perceives to exist between him/herself and the target culture). According to Schumann, a high psychological distance causes the L2 to be less successfully acquired, as it may lead learners to avoid L2 individuals and instead seek out L1 speakers, resulting in a consequent lack of input for second language acquisition and a reduced motivation for learning the L2.

The effect of such psychological factors has not been investigated in any depth in interlanguage pragmatics, but it appears that a high level of acculturation may be related to a high level of L2 pragmatic competence. Although Schmidt's (1983:169) findings that his informant, Wes', grammatical competence was low despite a low psychological distance did not support Schumann's acculturation hypothesis, Wes was found to evidence a relatively high level of L2 pragmatic competence. This would tend to suggest a link between a low psychological distance and a high L2 pragmatic competence. On the other hand, however, it can also be suggested that pragmatic competence is also a possible loser as regards culture shock as the conscious effort to overcome the barrier of cultural differences depends on individual decisions. A number of empirical findings in the interlanguage pragmatic literature have shown, for example, that learners "...may opt for pragmatic distinctiveness ... as a strategy of identity assertion" (Kasper/Schmidt 1996:156). In other words, learners may not want to resemble natives of the L2-culture, as they may feel uncomfortable with L2 norms, finding them, for example, too impolite or too polite, as the case may be, when compared to their own L1 norms. Hinkel (1996), for example, investigated learners' perceptions of L2 pragmalinguistic norms and behaviours. She found that cross-cultural differences led learners to reject L2 norms in specific language use situations despite these learners having claimed to generally adhere to L1 norms. Furthermore, Siegal (1996:374), reporting on a case study of one advanced second language learner of Japanese, points out that speakers construct their identity through language use and behaviour. If a learner is not comfortable with the identity associated with a particular language form, s/he is likely to reject it (cf. Kasper 1995c:82).

3.4.2 The L2 pragmatic norm — An appropriate option?

As early as 1972, Selinker recommended that any investigation into the process of second language acquisition necessitates a contrastive study of three distinct sets of productive data, namely:

- Utterances in the learner's native language produced by the learner (L1);
- Interlanguage utterances produced by the learner (IL);
- Target language utterances produced by native speakers of that target language (L2) (Selinker 1972: 214).

Since then this design has been widely emulated in interlanguage pragmatic studies (cf. Firth/Wagner 1997: 291, Kasper 1998b: 199), albeit with L1 speakers other than the exact learners in question. Indeed, Kasper (1997b: 310), writing in defence of this current interlanguage pragmatic practice, comments:

SLA researchers have legitimate and important interests in assessing learners' IL knowledge and actions not just as achievements in their own right but measured against some kind of standard.

In other words, it is important to have a yardstick to establish what is distinct about interlanguage realisations and thus, in turn, to dictate foreign and second language curricula. Nonetheless, it must be recognised that an L2 norm is not always ideal. Some of the difficulties posed by such a measure are discussed in the following:

Regional, gender, social class and age-based variation

The choice of an L2 norm involves consideration of regional, gender, social class and age-based variation. Although still rather limited in nature, some research does exist on variation in pragmatics.²⁸ Schneider (1999), for example, found differences between compliment responses in Irish English and American English, and Muhr (1993, 1994) pragmatic differences between Austrian Standard German and German Standard German. Also, as early as 1978, Schlieben-Lange/Weydt identified pragmatic differences between compliment responses in the Rhineland and those in Swabia, and a recent study by Birkner/Kern (2000) revealed that West German interviewees and interviewers attempt to minimise inequality in job interviews whereas East Germans deal openly with inequality, leading East Germans to engage in a lower level of disagreement and to deny assertiveness outwardly. Given such variation within one language and also further gender-, social- and age-based variation, it is little wonder that homogeneous L1, L2 and interlanguage informants may be difficult to access.

Flawed native speaker communication

The fact that native speaker communication is also flawed and characterised by misunderstandings prompts the question as to the wisdom of posing a communicatively competent L2 native speaker as an ideal L2 norm for learners.²⁹ Indeed, just as native speakers have various pragmalects which reflect individual personalities, so too may learners. However, there is no doubt that learner communication is relatively more susceptible to misunderstandings. The challenge is to establish which aspects of learner language use cause breakdowns in communication (cf. Littlewood 1983:202 *passim*).

L2 pragmatic competence — An unrealistic ideal?

Kasper (1998b:200) notes that “...early and sustained contact with the target language and culture may be required to attain native pragmatic knowledge and skill...” — in other words — it may be that whether adult learners wish to or not, they may not be capable of attaining native speaker competence (cf. House 1997b:83f, Kasper 1997c:117).

Negative pragmatic transfer and pragmatic failure

Differences due to negative pragmatic transfer, often equated with pragmatic failure in the ILP literature, may or may not trigger pragmatic failure. Indeed, the decisive factor here appears to be whether any differences are compatible with the cultural assumptions and belief system of the speech community in question (cf. House/Kasper 2000:105f).

Low native speaker expectancies and negative views of learner L2 pragmatic competence

Native speakers often show a lenience towards learners regarding politeness norms, particularly towards learners of lower linguistic competence (cf. Enomoto/Marriott 1994:155f). Indeed, it may be that a pragmatically competent learner is viewed negatively by native speakers of the target language, as native speakers may prefer learners to act as foreigners in certain contexts and not lay claim to membership of their society (cf. Fouser 1997:24, House/Kasper 2000:113, Kasper 1998b:200). This phenomenon can be observed, for example, in some native speakers’ dislike of learners’ emulation of reflections of group membership, such as obscenities, slang or a very informal style of speaking (cf. Janicki 1985:13).

Benefits of “acting the foreigner”

As far as the communicative effect of a non-L2-like pragmatic competence is concerned, it must be admitted that “acting the foreigner” may bring certain rewards or may, at the least, prevent learners from being judged according to a native speaker norm (cf. Faerch/Kasper 1987b:125). As a result, learners may purposefully exploit their non-native status for a particular end, as highlighted by a recent article by House/Kasper (2000:114).

Construction of common ground

Kasper (Odense postgraduate seminar 1998) has suggested that it may be that common ground has to be constructed in communication between learners and native speakers, and that learner features, such as the overuse of external mitigation, may be necessary in such communication. Consequently, they may not represent “deviant” features of interlanguage (cf. also Kasper 1997c: 118).

Being different — A strategy of disidentification

A further possibility is that learners may consciously diverge from the L2 norm in order to disidentify themselves from the L2 society and so sustain individual or group identity (cf. 3.4.1 on this point). In addition, it has been found that the construction of identity may also involve divergence from L1 as well as L2 norms. Research by Blum-Kulka (1991: 269) reveals, for example, that American bilingual immigrants in Israel adopt an “intercultural style”, different from both the L1 and L2, which serves as an identity marker. Also Yoon (1991: 87ff) finds evidence of bi-directional pragmatic transfer in the L1 and L2 of Korean bilingual immigrants in the US which highlights differences between monolingual and bilingual speakers.

Dilemma of lingua-franca

Interactants in a lingua-franca context are usually not competent in L2 pragmatics and, indeed, it seems that many make allowances for seemingly inappropriate use. House/Kasper (2000: 111f) remark in this regard:

In English as lingua franca interactions, ..., it is not felt necessary to reach optimal levels of native speaker like conversational behavior. Rather, ...interactants make a conscious effort to make do with each other's limited English competence, accepting it and thus making it acceptable.

Indeed, interactants may, in general, be unsure of the competence of their interactants and, thus, be prepared to construct meaning together (cf. Lesznyák 2002).

Goal of language learning

Some foreign language learners, especially those who learn a language for a special purpose, such as to be able to read scientific journals in a foreign language, will usually not be exposed to many native speakers of the target language. Pragmatic knowledge is, therefore, rather superfluous for such individuals (cf. Judd 1999: 160f on this point).

There is no doubt that choosing an L2 norm provides valuable information regarding what is different about learner data. However, in the light of the points highlighted here, it is clear that the interlanguage pragmatic researcher must, in analysing interlanguage and L2 data, disregard the “‘difference = deficit’ hypothesis” long adhered to in interlanguage pragmatic research (House/Kasper 2000: 104), and

instead adopt a descriptive, non-evaluative approach to his/her data. Where possible, s/he should aim to predict which aspects of learner linguistic behaviour are likely to lead to pragmatic failure and which not; which aspects will be relatively more easily accepted and which less. No doubt this is a difficult task, given that acceptance depends predominantly on the particular situation and on the interactants involved (cf. Nikula 1996:197).

The present study adopts an L1, L2, IL approach in order to highlight the distinctiveness of the present learners' speech act realisations. However, an attempt is made to take the discussion on the appropriateness of an L2 norm into account by adopting a descriptive approach to the analysis of learners' developing interlanguage. To underline the learner-focus, the term "learner" rather than "non-native speaker" is used. In addition, evaluative terms, such as under-use and over-use, error, deficiency and deviant are not employed (cf. also House/Kasper 2000: 101).

CHAPTER 4

Experimental design

The design of the present longitudinal study concerning the development of L2 pragmatic competence is outlined in the following. Here the instruments employed (4.1), the data collection procedure adopted (4.1.2), the informants chosen (4.2) and the speech acts selected (4.3) are first detailed. Following this, the particular aspects of pragmatic and discourse competence dealt with are addressed in detail (4.4). The section ends with an overview of the method of analysis and presentation used in the study (4.4.2).

4.1 Research instruments

We need to get away from the best-method mentality, and return to the notion of customizing the research design to fit the question.
(Bardovi-Harlig 1999b:238)

Data collection instruments in interlanguage pragmatics have all too often been condemned or acclaimed from a general standpoint. Bardovi-Harlig, in her 1999b article entitled “Researching method”, reminds us of the fallacy of such evaluations by clearly illustrating that the quality of a particular instrument is a function, not of the instrument itself, but rather of the particular research question at hand (cf. also Grotjahn/Kasper 1991:109, Turnbull 2001:48f). Consequently, one of the first questions to be posed in any research project concerns the particular criteria to be met by the research instrument. Only then can an appropriate instrument be selected or, if necessary, a new instrument designed. Let us turn then to the criteria to be fulfilled in the present study.

Criteria

The present study is first and foremost a longitudinal study of the development of the L2 pragmatic competence of thirty-three Irish learners of German. As a result, it was important to choose an instrument with which informants’ development could be tracked throughout time and which could be administered easily at regular intervals throughout their year abroad. Added to such considerations were also

logistical difficulties given that the learners were scattered around fourteen different German cities and towns during their year abroad from Bielefeld in the North to Augsburg in the South, and from Aachen in the West to Berlin in the East. The aim was to elicit data from the learners at three intervals over the study-abroad period. It was also essential not to overtax informants with data collection procedures. Indeed, Hoffman-Hicks (1999:63) found that changes in the composition of samples due to loss of participants over time was one of the major problems of her longitudinal study (cf. also Hatch/Lazaraton 1991:34 and Keeves 1988:121).

In addition, it was necessary to gather Irish English and German native speaker data which would be comparable with the learner data. Cross-cultural comparability was, therefore, also an important factor, as indeed was ease of analysis and ease of administration given the large number of respondent groups and the resulting large volume of data (cf. Larsen-Freeman/Long 1991:27). Furthermore, the quantitative nature of the investigation demanded homogeneous groups of native and learner informants — particularly with regard to previous contact with other cultures.

As outlined in 2.2.2, the focus of the present investigation is on spoken language and specifically on production rather than on comprehension. We are interested in both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of learners' L2, i.e., in learners' knowledge of the linguistic resources available in German for realising particular speech acts, knowledge of sequential aspects of speech acts and, finally, knowledge of appropriate contextual use of the German language. Importantly, it should be noted here that pragmatic knowledge is the primary focus of interest — an especially important point of consideration in the choice of data collection instrument since a learner's underlying level of pragmatic knowledge may not be reflected in the data gathered, if s/he is overburdened by fatigue, complex interpersonal relationships or cognitive overload as a result of difficulties s/he may experience interacting in a particular situation where time for contemplation is at a minimum. In other words, factors which may negatively affect pragmatic ability are to be kept to a minimum in the present study.

In the light of the broad and various criteria, it is clear that more than one data collection instrument is needed, i.e., that triangulation of data is necessary.

4.1.1 Triangulation of data

Triangulation of data has been defined by Kasper (1998a:104) as the use of different data sources “... *um dieselbe Fragestellung aus verschiedenen methodischen Perspektiven zu betrachten*...” (...in order to examine a question from different methodological perspectives...) or “... *um verschiedene Aspekte eines komplexeren Problems zu beleuchten*” (...to illuminate different aspects of a complex problem). Neumann (1995:96) summarises the function of triangulation as creating a “... *Möglichkeit zur Informationsmaximierung*” (... a chance to maximise information).

The advantages of triangulation are manifold. Kasper (1998a: 105) points out that they include firstly the reduction of any possible task-bias, and a consequent increase in the level of objectivity of findings. Secondly, similar findings from a number of instruments lead to a higher degree of reliability than reliance on a single source.

Triangulation cannot, however, be seen as a cure-all or as an easy process and the view that the more data one has, the better it is, must be strongly refuted. Indeed, each task presents a different reality and so is not directly comparable with other data types. Flick (1992: 17f), for example, notes:

... jede Methode [konstituiert] den Gegenstand, der mit ihr erforscht bzw. abgebildet werden soll, auf spezifische Weise ... Dies hat zur Folge, daß bei der Kombination von Surveys und Feldforschung ..., Interviews und (teilnehmender) Beobachtung ... oder allgemeiner von qualitativen und quantitativen Verfahren nicht davon ausgegangen werden kann, daß jeweils der eine Ansatz das Gleiche zu Tage fördern wird, wie der andere, oder daß bei Diskrepanzen der Ergebnisse das eine (oder das andere) Resultat damit widerlegt sei.

(... every method constitutes the object which it researches or depicts in a specific way... The consequence of this is that in combining surveys and field methods..., interviews and (participant) observation ... or, more generally, qualitative and quantitative processes, it cannot be assumed that each approach will bring the same as the other approach to light or that where there are discrepancies in results that the one (or other) result will be overridden.)

In other words, Flick (1992: 17) criticises those, such as Denzin (1988: 511), who describe triangulation as “The use of multiple methods in an investigation so as to overcome the weaknesses or biases of a single method ...”, arguing that one should not, in employing a number of methods to investigate a particular object, assume that the various results can be simply added together to get a total overview. Flick’s view is reiterated by Riemer (1997: 86), who states that “... *im Forschungsprozeß [ist] jedes Datenset hinsichtlich seiner Kontexte einzeln zu erfassen* ...” (... in the research process every dataset [should be] described individually according to its context). In addition, the *Arbeitsgruppe Fremdsprachenerwerb Bielefeld* (1996: 151) note that different methods cannot be combined at will. Instead, they highlight the need to specify the status of a particular instrument in a specific research project and to outline the relationship between each instrument and the object of investigation and also between the particular instruments employed.

Production questionnaires (discourse completion task (DCT), free discourse completion task (FDCT)) are the primary data source in the present study. However, these are supplemented by supporting instruments with which various types of data are elicited (cf. Table 4).

The purpose of triangulation in the study was for each of the two main purposes of triangulation highlighted by Kasper (1998a: 104). On the one hand,

Table 4. Data collection instruments and data types in the present study

Data collection instrument	Type of data elicited
1. Pre-year abroad questionnaire	Factual/self-assessment data
2. Post-year abroad questionnaire	Factual/self-assessment data/metapragmatic data
3. DCT	Production data (requests) ^a
4. FDCT	Production data (offers/refusals of offers)
5. Roleplay & retrospective interview	Metapragmatic data
6. Assessment questionnaire	Metapragmatic data

^a Realisations of apologies were also elicited in the present study from both the native speaker and learner groups. However, it soon became clear that the vast amount of data which included five sets of elicited data (three learner sets and two native speaker sets) of realisations of four speech acts (i.e., 20 datasets) had been overly ambitious for an individual project. In addition, the huge amounts of data made decisions regarding what to actually include within the constraints of the present research report extremely difficult. Consequently, it was considered preferable not to include the apology data elicited in this study but rather to report on it at a later stage.

assessment data and to a lesser extent, data from the pre- and post-year abroad questionnaires, were elicited in order to illuminate different aspects of learners’ speech act productions. The availability of information pertaining to how native speakers of the informants’ L1 and L2 would assess the situational parameters involved, for example, enables interpretation of the findings from a sociopragmatic perspective. Such information allows the researcher to interpret, for instance, whether a particular learner feature is due to a lack of knowledge with regard to situational variation or whether learners have perhaps interpreted the particular situation in an L1 rather than an L2 manner (cf. 4.1.1.1.1 on this point).

On the other hand, metapragmatic data in the form of retrospective data (4.1.1.3) and data from a post-year abroad questionnaire (4.1.1.2) was employed to examine learners’ developing pragmatic competence in the area of the relative complexity of offer-refusal exchange structures from different methodological perspectives. Here the role of awareness in such development was of interest. Such data was crucial in increasing the validity of findings. Had changes in the complexity of the learners’ offer-refusal exchanges been found in the production data alone, for example, it could have been argued that such changes were not due to the effect of a stay in the target speech community, but possibly rather to waning learner motivation in completing the same questions on the production questionnaire over time. After all, learners may have simply written less for each situation with time — a possible explanation of any reduction in exchange complexity. Alternatively, had differences in exchange complexity been recorded for Irish English NS and German NS and had the Irish English NS norm been reflected in the learner data collected prior to the year abroad and also in the learner data elicited following the year abroad, it would have been concluded that no development had taken place in this regard. However, it is quite possible that this group of learners may have noticed

more than was reflected in the production data — i.e. they may not have wished to emulate the L2 norm (cf. 3.4.2).¹

Further data concerning the backgrounds of each group of informants was needed to ensure their homogeneity, especially as far as contact with other cultures was concerned. Such information was ascertained for all groups of participants via the inclusion of a number of questions on the production questionnaires administered to the particular groups (cf. Appendix 5) (cf. 4.1.2). Given the focal role of the year abroad group in the present study, however, it was necessary to elicit additional background information on these students. For this reason, a pre-year abroad questionnaire detailed in 4.1.1.2, was designed and administered to the year abroad students prior to departure.

4.1.1.1 *Production questionnaires*

Given the focus of interest on production data on the level of the speech act/speech act sequence, the choice of data-gathering method consisted of ethnographic data or the use of elicitation devices, namely multiple choice questionnaires, elicited conversation, roleplays and production questionnaires. Of these possible production instruments, production questionnaires (PQ) were chosen for employment in this study. Specifically, a discourse completion task was used for eliciting request realisations and a particular type of production questionnaire, namely the free discourse completion task (FDCT), was developed to elicit data on offers and refusals of offers.

Production questionnaires have been used extensively in the field of inter-language pragmatics as a means of eliciting speech act realisations since Blum-Kulka first adapted the so-called discourse completion task (DCT) for use in this field in 1982.² The DCT is best known as the instrument which was employed in the CCSARP to investigate both native and non-native realisations of requests and apologies for different social contexts across various languages and cultures, using a single coding system (cf. 2.6.2). Since the publication of this study, adaptations of this instrument have been developed leading various researchers, such as, Johnston et al. (1998), Kasper (2000a) and Sasaki (1998) to have recently introduced the generic term “production questionnaire” to also encompass variations on the original questionnaire.

A production questionnaire is, in essence, a series of short written roleplays based on everyday situations which are designed to elicit a specific speech act by requiring informants to complete a turn of dialogue for each item. The comparison with a roleplay stems from the fact that the researcher is interested in what is *said* rather than written in a given situation and also from the fact that the situations are oral rather than written (cf. Rintell/Mitchell 1989:270). Given the importance of contextual features in determining the degree of politeness chosen in a particular utterance, the speech act to be elicited is kept constant, while values for a range of

social variables, such as social distance and social dominance, are varied. This is achieved in production questionnaires by the inclusion of a short description of the scene before each interaction. In this description, not only the general circumstances are set, but also the relevant situational parameters. Kasper (2000a:326ff) provides an overview of the various types of production questionnaire which have descended from the original DCT. She differentiates between four main types, namely (a) the “classic” discourse completion task (DCT), (b) the dialogue construction questionnaire, (c) the open item — verbal response only and (d) the open item, free response.

In the classic DCT, a preliminary first turn of dialogue is often included to act as a stimulus and the hearer’s positive/negative response to the missing turn, also termed a “rejoinder” by Johnston et al. (1998:157), is also given.³ In contrast, the second type, the dialogue construction questionnaire, does not include a hearer response, and the gap may or may not be prefaced by a turn from the interlocutor. Informants are required to complete the turn(s) of either one or two participants. In the third and fourth varieties, there is no attempt to complete or construct a dialogue. Instead, informants are merely required to write what they would say/do in the particular situation given. In type three, a written verbal response is required, whereas in variety four, the informant is not restricted to a verbal response, but may also give details of a non-verbal response or of opting out.

The format of all four of these production questionnaires allows role-taking, i.e., informants may be required to complete what an imaginary person would say in the particular situation (cf. Kasper 2000a:328). In the classic DCT employed in the CCSARP, for example, the subject was required to read each item and insert in the space provided what s/he thought the particular character in the situation would have said in the given situation, whether that character was a student of the same or opposite gender, a waiter, a work-colleague, a professor, a police-officer, or whatever. However, informants may also be requested to play themselves.⁴

The DCT is, as Bardovi-Harlig (1999b:238) aptly summarises, “... at once the most celebrated and most maligned of all the methods used in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics research”. However, as she goes on to emphasise, no instrument can be said to be good or bad, but rather suitable or unsuitable. Indeed, production questionnaires have been the focus of a variety of validity studies — an overview of these is presented in Billmyer/Varghese (2000), Johnston et al. (1998) and Rose/Ono (1995). The DCT has been found to enable the collection of formulas and strategies which reflect the content of formulas or strategies used in everyday speech and which are comparable across cultures and languages. For the analysis of speech act sets, it has thus been found to be a very suitable instrument. For other research questions, such as how a particular group of informants actually uses language in negotiation, it is, on the other hand, unsuitable as is discussed below (cf. also Bardovi-Harlig 1999b:246). The advantages which the DCT held for the

elicitation of request realisations in the present study are outlined in the following. Subsequent to this, the development of the FDCT for the elicitation of offer/refusal of offer realisations is discussed.

Despite the large time investment needed for the development of the questionnaire, the DCT is an effective instrument, allowing speech act realisation data to be gathered from a large sample relatively quickly and easily. This factor was of vital importance for the present purpose, given the various groups — all of approximately thirty informants — involved in the project. Furthermore, since the same situations were completed by all groups of informants, the data was comparable across culture and as the core group of participants could be requested to complete the questionnaire on a number of occasions, their progress could be tracked through time. Furthermore, the ability to vary contextual variables allows the investigation of learners' knowledge of how to vary their use of language in accordance with changing factors.

In addition, the data elicited by a production questionnaire reflects the content of oral data despite its written form. This was illustrated, for example, in a study by Beebe/Cummings (1996), in which the validity of the production questionnaire as a data-gathering instrument was investigated. These researchers compared refusals gathered using authentic telephone conversations and using a production questionnaire (a dialogue construction questionnaire) and confirmed that the productions elicited using the questionnaire accurately reflected the content expressed in real-life situations, a finding also reported by Margalef-Boada (1993:155) who compared open roleplay data with production questionnaire data. Similarly, Bodman/Eisenstein (1988) and Eisenstein/Bodman (1993) found that natural observation, written questionnaires, oral questionnaires and open roleplays revealed similar semantic strategies.

In contrast to roleplay data, the data gathered using a production questionnaire is, given its written form and the associated time available for contemplation, collected "offline", i.e., "... the participant is prompted to recall pragmatic information from memory and report rather than use it ..." (Kasper 2000a:317). As a result, elicitation of knowledge of pragmatic issues (a particular interest of the present study) — rather than of real-life realisations — was facilitated (Kasper 2000a:330). Indeed, Bergman/Kasper (1993:101), in a study on native and non-native apology realisations using a production questionnaire (dialogue construction questionnaire), also support this view, commenting that the questionnaire "... provides learners with an opportunity for knowledge display that is precluded for many non-native speakers by the cognitive demands of face-to-face interaction". In other words, the power of pragmatic ability in concealing pragmatic knowledge is diluted somewhat by using a production questionnaire since learners are given adequate time for contemplation and so are granted an opportunity to activate this pragmatic knowledge (cf. also Cohen 1997:149).

The written form of production questionnaires means that they lack the context of ongoing verbal interaction as there is no human interlocutor with whom respondents must negotiate since, unlike natural conversation, the subjects are in complete control — there is no-one except themselves to sit in judgement on the appropriateness of their responses and neither is there any danger of their responses having negative repercussions. This is one reason why the elicited data is not as complex as authentic data. Indeed, this was illustrated by the study conducted by Beebe/Cummings (1996) into ethnographically-gathered telephone data and questionnaire data for native speaker refusals. Their findings support the paucity of questionnaire data as regards interaction. They state:

...the main reason the spoken data are different from the Discourse Completion Test data is that the Discourse Completion Test, a written hypothetical exercise, does not bring out the 'psycho-social' dynamics of an interaction between members of a group. (Beebe/Cummings 1996: 77)

Their results show that the production questionnaire did not accurately reflect natural speech as far as the richness of data in respect of, for example, the number of repetitions and elaborations, the amount of hedging, the depth of emotion, the number of turns needed to realise a speech act and the range of formulas and strategies, was concerned. Similar results were found by Yuan (2001) who in a comparison of data-gathering methods, reports oral DCT data to be richer and more elaborate than written DCT data. Further studies with similar findings include those by Bodman/Eisenstein (1988) and Houck/Gass (1996). Although the somewhat less complex data of the conventional production questionnaire may represent a disadvantage for projects focusing on interaction, given the present concentration on learners' pragmatic competence with reference to speech act production, it is by no means a negative factor for the present study — on the contrary, it allows concentration on learners' pragmatic knowledge of the essential elements of speech act realisation.

In spite of the many advantages which the production questionnaire offers the present investigation of request realisations, there are also a number of caveats of which it is necessary to be aware and, if possible, take account of in the analysis.

Firstly, the belief that contextual variables, such as social distance and social dominance, can be maintained stable in an interaction, is an assumption inherent in the production questionnaire which is reductive, as these factors are in fact continuously evolving (cf. 2.4.3). Also, the situational descriptions provided are of necessity simplified with the minimum of information given. As a result, respondents are forced to elaborate the context themselves, which naturally reduces the degree of control as different people may imagine different details (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 1999b:242, Kasper 1998a:94). However, even when a rather extensive situational description is given, the situation described does not necessarily reflect the complexity and ambiguity of natural data (cf. Billmyer/Varghese 2000:545).

Furthermore, there has been some research conducted into the relative directness of the strategies employed in data collected using production questionnaires. Hartford/Bardovi-Harlig (1992), in their research into differences between rejections elicited using production questionnaires and authentic data gathered within the institutional context of academic advisory sessions, found evidence, for example, that respondents tend to employ more direct strategies in questionnaires. Similar to the research findings on length of response, they explain this with reference to the lack of interaction in the DCT:

... the DCT allows the students to be less polite (i.e., to use fewer status preserving strategies), and to employ more Bald-on-Record statements than does the natural situation. ...Because of the anonymity of the DCT, students can say what they really think, and vent feelings that would result in a tremendous loss of face in the actual advising sessions.
(Hartford/Bardovi-Harlig 1992: 48)

Rintell/Mitchell (1989: 271) report of similar findings with reference to situations in which an obligatory request was elicited in their research on the differences in data gathered using a dialogue construction questionnaires and a closed roleplay.

Finally, research findings have pointed to differences in the length of the data collected using a production questionnaire, roleplays and authentic data, production data being found to yield quantitatively the least data. Eisenstein/Bodman (1993), in their data elicited from a production questionnaire, field-notes and roleplays, found, for example, that although all three methods yielded the same semantic strategies, the production questionnaire data was found to be the shortest due to a lack of interaction. In a comparable study, Turnbull (2001) finds the oral and written DCT to yield less data compared to roleplays and experimental elicitation. Similar findings were also reported by Beebe/Cummings (1996) between production questionnaires and natural, spontaneous, spoken conversation, and by Margalef-Boada (1993: 152) and Sasaki (1998) for roleplays and production questionnaires. Cf. also findings by Rintell/Mitchell (1989). On the other hand, the waffle phenomenon found to be a feature of learners' speech, has been noted to be particularly common in elicited written data, or non-interactional oral data, particularly among intermediate and advanced learners, irrespective of L1 (cf. 3.2.3 for further discussion).⁵

It was the classic DCT which was chosen to elicit native speaker and learner request realisations in the present study (cf. 4.1.1.1.2 for details of the DCT situations chosen). This option was preferred over the dialogue construction questionnaire which does not include a rejoinder as it was felt that use of the classic DCT would facilitate a comparison with previous findings of the CCSARP given the lack of clarity as to the effect of the rejoinder on realisations (cf. 4.1.1.1, endnote 3). The option to opt-out included in the fourth type of production questionnaire

(open item, free response), is not given to the present informants as such information would distract from the research question at hand which concerns learners' and native speakers' knowledge of how to request in a particular situation not whether they should request or not in the situation.

The eight DCT situations adopted in the present study for the elicitation of learner and native speaker realisations were based broadly on those employed in the CCSARP (cf. 2.6.2 on this project). However, since three of these situations appeared to have proved unreliable in eliciting the required speech act, pre-tests were carried out on all the CCSARP DCT items given a lack of satisfactory explanation in the literature.⁶ Apart from focusing on the three questionable situations, it was also important to ensure that the remaining situations caused no problems despite possible regional variation, in the case of Irish English. These tests confirmed that the three situations in question were not valid as regards the elicitation of requests.⁷ These items were consequently replaced by newly developed items, pre-tested in advance.⁸ The remaining five CCSARP request situations were, however, included on the questionnaire with some changes — as discussed in the following.

Blum-Kulka et al. (1989a: 16) remark of the necessity to adapt the DCT to the given target culture's social and pragmatic system. This process was also undertaken in the case of the Irish English DCT in the present study. English character names, such as Ellen, Bob, Kelly and Ann which had appeared on the CCSARP DCT were substituted by Irish names, such as Louise, Jack, Margaret and Anne. In addition, the discourse convention included in the opening of the presentation item was found to be rather untypical of informal conventions in an Irish setting based on the present researcher's native speaker intuitions (given a lack of research in this area on Irish English). As a result, the item was changed from a simple identification of "Tony Brendan speaking" to a greeting and number — "Hello, 2314311." Here further negotiation was, of course, necessary to identify the identity of both speakers.⁹

Further changes made to the basic CCSARP questionnaire were based on the specific nature of the project in question and the main group of respondents. The pronouns of address appearing on the German version of the questionnaire (in the elicitation of background information and the completion instructions) were, for example, changed in favour of the informal "du" form since its use served to ease the intrinsic formality of the elicitation situation and to increase comprehension (cf. also 4.1.1.1, endnote 10, part (b)).

In each of the eight situations presented, participants were required to role-take. In the light of Rose's (1992) research findings (cf. 4.1.1.1) which suggest a possible decrease in the validity of findings when participants take on other roles, consideration was given to changing the situations to read "you" rather than mentioning a particular person's name, such as Margaret or Jack or Jim, etc., as on the CCSARP DCT. However, it was decided not to make any changes in this regard in order to ensure comparability of findings.

Free Discourse Completion Task (FDCT)

Despite having been previously employed in analyses of refusals of offers (cf. studies by Beebe et al. 1990, Chen et al. 1995:125), the variations of the production questionnaire outlined above were not felt to be suitable for the investigation of offer-refusal exchange structures. This was due to the fact that a classic DCT or a dialogue construction questionnaire does not allow sequential aspects of speech acts to be investigated. Consequently, the hypothesis that exchanges encompassing offers and refusals of offers are more complex in an Irish than in a German context (cf. 4.4.1.1) cannot be tested since the inclusion of two or more incomplete turns of dialogue in each questionnaire item would in itself have biased subjects' responses. This point is best illustrated by referring to an example of a production questionnaire item employed by Beebe et al. (1990) to investigate realisations of refusals of offers in American society. Item number 9 in their DCT, for example, reads as follows:

- (1) You are at a friend's house for lunch.
Friend: How about another piece of cake?
You: -----

Friend: Come on, just a little piece?
You: -----

- (Beebe et al. 1990:71)

As is evident from the two missing turns here, the researchers are presuming that the realisation of particular offers and, therefore, also of refusals of offers, involves a series of turns rather than speech act pairs. Whether this is true or not cannot, however, be investigated using the above questionnaire, because the respondent is left with no choice. S/he is forced to fill in both turns for the exchange to make sense. On the other hand, the single blank space provided for respondents in dialogue construction questionnaires (e.g., Chen et al. 1995: 125) largely confines respondents to realising the appropriate speech act using a single utterance and is, thus, even more unsuitable. Johnston et al. (1998: 158), Turner (2001: 35) and Yuan (2001: 284 *passim*) also note the difficulty of researching discourse elements using a production questionnaire (cf. also Trosborg 1995: 299f). The former researchers state:

...as far as discourse aspects of linguistic action are concerned —, ... turn-taking, ... — the construct validity of PQs [production questionnaires] is necessarily very low: such discourse-level phenomena do not show up in one-turn responses. (Johnston et al. 1998: 158)

Here reference is clearly made to existing production questionnaires. However, as shown in the following, the range of such questionnaires can be expanded to include more suitable formats for investigating exchange structure. The Free Discourse Completion Task (FDCT), for example, an alternative variation of the production questionnaire, was developed for use in the present study.¹⁰ This instrument is outlined in the following.

This research instrument essentially requires respondents to write both sides of an open roleplay or dialogue for a series of situations (cf. Appendix 5 for an example). For each item, the initial situation is described and each participant's communicative goal explicitly stated; in the latter case, the actual speech act to be elicited is openly stated. Despite possible restrictions (discussed below), such instructions concerning the relevant communicative goal were necessary since the learner informants, in the absence of these directions, may have experienced cognitive overload when confronted with the task of completing dialogues. Alternatively, they may have tended towards acceptance rather than refusal given the face-threatening nature of refusals. Indeed, in the absence of any explicit information with regard to whether respondents should accept or refuse in particular situations, Gass/Houck (1999: 36) elicited fifteen Nonaccepts or Alternatives and eight Accepts in the roleplays they conducted — a rather high number of Accepts given the way-out situations sketched. Furthermore, in the light of the rather opaque nature of refusals (e.g., categories, such as acceptance that function as a refusal, etc.), researchers who do not indicate in some way whether an acceptance/refusal is required may experience considerable difficulties in the coding process (cf. Gass/Houck 1999: 14f).¹¹ The precaution of stating participants' communicative goals was also taken by Möhl (1996: 43) in her research using a production questionnaire in order to ensure elicitation of the appropriate speech act and, therefore, also comparability of data (cf. also Olshtain/Cohen 1983: 31 on this point).

As a rule, the FDCT dialogue begins with an interlocutor initiation given on the questionnaire. This serves to focus the resulting conversations on the task at hand, to make them more comparable for analysis, to “set the scene” where ambiguities may arise and also to assist participants in some way in starting the dialogue, thus decreasing the cognitive load and also reducing completion time. In this regard, Bardovi-Harlig/Hartford (1993b) found learners to perform better when realising rejections on a production questionnaire which included a prompt than on an open questionnaire which required a rejection to be supplied on the basis of a situational description alone. The reason, they suggest, is that the prompt served to define the situation (cf. also 4.1.1.1, endnote 10, part (e)).

On the FDCT, respondents are specifically instructed to write as much as they feel is necessary for each situation, an instruction which also facilitates the analysis of the speech act as a series of turns. A related practical benefit is the simultaneous elicitation of realisations of two separate, but related, speech acts — e.g., here offers

and refusals of offers. A large blank space of eight centimetres (decided on following pre-tests) is left after each item for students to complete the relevant dialogues.

Participants completing the FDCT employed in this study were not required to role-take, but rather to imagine themselves in the given situation and to write the resulting dialogue. In this way, participants were not forced to imagine what someone else would say in a particular situation for at least one speech act, leading to an increase in validity (cf. above). Although it may have been preferable only to analyse those speech acts for which participants played themselves, this was not feasible since it would have meant requesting participants to complete twelve rather than six dialogues — a very time-consuming task which would have risked students' further co-operation and which may have affected the productions produced by informants.¹²

Although similar in many ways to the DCT, the FDCT also has specific strengths and weaknesses which should be highlighted. There is no doubt but that its main strength lies in the ease with which the sequential nature of speech act realisations can be investigated in a comparative manner. Although it may seem that the fact that one informant is in direct control of the situation, knowing what the outcome of the dialogue is going to be and determining what both parties say, may lead to an avoidance of any complex negotiations — such is not the case. Indeed, the interactions elicited by the FDCT are relatively complex, involving a significant degree of inner negotiation, in contrast to those single speech act realisations elicited by conventional production questionnaires. This, it may be suggested, results from the fact that, in contrast to existing production questionnaires, subjects are forced to interact with an imaginary interlocutor until an appropriate compromise is found. An example of such negotiation is seen in the following dialogue from the present corpus written by a NS of Irish English:

- (2) Maths, E25F: (cf. Appendix 3 for a situational description or 4.1.1.1.2)
- You:* Ah you'll be ok. Sure didn't you get a few grinds [Irish English for private, after-school tuition]?
- Friend:* Yeh, I did but I've forgotten all that
- You:* Look, I get on ok with my maths, do you want to come over some time and I'll give you a few pointers?
- Friend:* No honestly — you have your own study to do.
- You:* Are you sure — it'd be no hassle
- Friend:* No thanks all the same — I'll struggle on by myself.
- You:* Ok then see you tomorrow.
- Friend:* All right, 'til then

As can be seen, the dialogue elicited is quite lengthy, with two attempts to persuade the friend to accept the offer of help with maths. Additional evidence of the interactive nature of the FDCT is found in the analysis of the offer-refusal exchange structures found in the present data (cf. 5.1).

A further strength is that the learners and German native speakers each themselves complete both roles in the dialogue, thus excluding the possibility that the resulting productions include traces of foreigner talk.

The FDCT shares a number of advantages with other types of production questionnaire also — as these are discussed in detail above, they are mentioned only briefly here. These include ease of elicitation of a large number of speech act realisations, comparable across cultures and languages, from a large sample, in a quick and efficient manner, and also ease of variability of contextual variables, a flexibility which facilitates the investigation of speech act production in a wide variety of situations. Other advantages relate to the elicitation of prototypical speech act realisations — the resulting dialogues represent a stereotypical interaction in the mind of the respondent and, as such, portray the socially-accepted shape of offers/refusals of offers in a particular culture. Also, the investigation of underlying pragmatic knowledge is facilitated given adequate time for contemplation. Finally, the oral nature of the resulting interactions is to be noted despite the written form. In the elicited dialogue from the maths situation above, for example, some features of oral discourse can be clearly noted, namely contracted forms — e.g., “didn’t you?” for “did you not?”, “I’ll” for “I will” and “til” for “until” and also colloquial speech such as “Yeh” rather than the standard “Yes”.

The above said, it is, however, necessary to take into account that the FDCT is an instrument, which, like all other instruments, has its associated drawbacks to be recognised and compensated for, wherever possible. Firstly, as in the other production questionnaires, the assumption that contextual variables can be maintained stable in an interaction, is reductive. Also, the subject is forced to play the part of a person other than him/herself for one participant in the dialogue — suggesting possibly unreliable responses (cf. Rose 1992: 57, Wolfson et al. 1989: 181).

In addition, explicitly stating each participants’ communicative goal could be considered a rather artificial feature of the questionnaire since in natural conversation a speaker may not be sure of his/her communicative goal prior to an exchange — s/he may only decide on this in the course of the exchange. In an offer/refusal situation, for example, it is possible that a particular interlocutor may decide whether s/he wishes to accept or refuse a particular offer in the course of the interaction. The present format does not allow the elicitation of data representative of such situations — instead, it is constrained to eliciting data representative of situations in which interlocutors do know what they want — indeed, not a seldom occurrence in itself, it is suggested. A further possible drawback of specifying the communicative goals may relate to the fact that in authentic realisations, a particular interlocutor may not know his/her interlocutor’s communicative goal in a particular exchange. However, it is also not uncommon for interlocutors to have an inclination of how their interlocutor will respond in a particular exchange (cf. Yamashita 1996: 13). It should also be noted that any negative effect of such a

standardising control in the present case is counteracted by the free format of the FDCT which allows dialogue to develop in a more natural way than is the case in the DCT, where the hearer response ends all dialogue.

The six FDCT situations employed in the present study were developed by the researcher herself and the version translated into German by native speakers of German. Further details of these situations are given below (cf. 4.1.1.1.1, 4.1.1.1.2).

4.1.1.1.1 Assessment questionnaire. All of the eight DCT situations and six FDCT situations were felt to fulfil two basic criteria which had been proposed in the choice of situations. Firstly, the situations were to be realistic to both the Irish and German informants and to represent situations with which the student informants could identify. Secondly, the situations were to probe informants' pragmatic knowledge in a range of contexts. In the following, the efforts made to unite these two goals — a somewhat difficult task in instances — and the compromises made, are addressed.

Realistic situations

As to the realism of the particular situations, it was regrettable that, due to time constraints, neither the FDCT nor the DCT situations were based on ethnographic observation as is sometimes carried out prior to the development of a production questionnaire, and indeed recommended by Bardovi-Harlig (1999b:240) and Margalef-Boada (1993:42). Instead, items for the present study were chosen based on personal experiences of the researcher, on the experiences of other individuals or, in the case of the CCSARP request situations, on situations which had already proved successful in eliciting speech act realisations among students across various languages and cultures. In addition, the FDCT and DCT pre-tests carried out served to test the degree of realism and frequency of the particular situations. Also, two questions were included on an assessment questionnaire with the aim of eliciting further information on the frequency and realism of the situations. This assessment questionnaire was distributed to native speakers of Irish English and German on a later occasion (cf. below). In hindsight, it may have been beneficial to distribute a similar questionnaire to the year abroad students themselves. However, participation in the project was a concern given the high attrition rates often associated with longitudinal studies (cf. 4.1). One of the difficulties experienced in the development of the situations was that situations had to be realistic and familiar to all three groups of informants — to the Irish English NS, the German NS and, of course, to the study abroad students. Consequently, it was not feasible to include situations which would be specific to the year abroad, such as, for example, a request for information regarding which documents to bring to the foreign immigrant registration office (*Ausländeramt*). This situation, while very relevant in a year abroad setting, would likely not have been experienced by most of the native speakers concerned. In addition, no matter which situations are chosen, it is clear that at least some informants will most likely

not have experienced them even if they are expected to be very frequently occurring situations. The most that can be hoped for, therefore, is that students will have experienced situations characterised by similar situational constellations.

Measure of situational variation

The second criterion for the selection of situations was the inclusion of situational variation. The present situations were varied according to social dominance, social distance and, to a lesser extent, degree of imposition — concepts which go back to Brown/Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness theory. Rather than dealing with relative power, i.e., the extent to which a particular hearer can assert him/herself over his/her interlocutor, as in the face-saving view of politeness, social dominance is usually the focus of interest in empirical interlanguage pragmatics as it, being composed of status gained from factors, such as economic or political power, age, gender or professional status, is of a more tangible and transparent nature and is, thus, easier to access (cf., e.g., House 1979:77). However, it is not only society-based power which is an important determinant of social dominance or, indeed, power, but also situational power (cf., e.g., Brown/Levinson 1987:79). In other words, factors, such as a participant's rights and obligations, may also affect the values of this variable. Blum-Kulka/House (1989:142ff), in an assessment of the effect of different factors on the relative directness levels employed in requesting in different languages, find, for example, that the relative dominance of one particular speaker differs according to the particular roles played by the interactants in question (cf. also Hassall 1997:23 for a discussion of this matter).

Added to these difficulties of assessing the relative weight of a particular factor due to the complex interplay of numerous factors on a particular variable, is the problem of accurately accessing the values of situational constraints. Many researchers, confronted with the task of investigating issues of situational variation on pragmatic performance, specify role-relationships for each situation in accompanying situational descriptions and mistakenly presume that their informants will view these in a similar manner irrespective of the fact that they themselves may have a different role in society and/or be of a different culture than their informants (cf. Spencer-Oatey 1993:27ff). To ensure the validity of results, Spencer-Oatey (1993) recommends an assessment questionnaire be employed to check the accuracy of researchers' initial assumptions. This is particularly important where cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatic studies are concerned. Given the present target of providing subjects with an opportunity to demonstrate their pragmatic knowledge across a wide range of situations, it was not imperative to elicit exact information about the precise situational constellations of each situation. However, the addition of information pertaining to how native speakers of the informants' L1 and L2 assess such situational variables serves to enhance the analysis of learners' sociopragmatic behaviour (cf. also 4.1.1). Consequently, an assessment questionnaire was developed.

Assessment questionnaire design

As rating scales are considered valid measures of sociopragmatic judgements (cf. Kasper 1998a: 100), such an instrument was also employed in the present study. The questionnaire consisted of the situational descriptions of each of the items which appeared on the DCT and FDCT followed by a number of closed questions relating to each individual situation (cf. Appendix 6 for an example). All offer/refusal of offer situations and the newly developed request situations were included. It was not considered necessary to administer the assessment questionnaire for the CCSARP request situations employed to German native speakers, as this had already been done by Blum-Kulka/House (1989: 141ff).

Following a pre-test, a scale was finalised to measure respondents' assessments of the various situations accurately (cf. Appendix 6).¹³ Despite the caveat associated with the fact that such assessment questionnaires take factors to have a static value while in actual fact they are fluid, sometimes changing within a particular interaction (cf. 2.4.3), they do serve to broadly differentiate the constellations of one situation from another. In the present case a 5-point scale, rather than the 3-point scale used in the CCSARP assessment questionnaire, was developed to measure social distance and social dominance in the light of Spencer-Oatey's (1993:44) criticism of the use of 3-point scales. The CCSARP results were later recalculated using a 5-point scale to enable a rank ordering of all request situations. These revised values are presented without brackets in Appendix 7. Particular care was taken to inform participants of what each value on the scales represented, i.e., instead of being asked to choose from a scale of 1–5, informants were asked to choose between the assessments "lower," "a little lower," "same," "a little higher" and "higher" for the social dominance of the offerer/requester relative to his/her interlocutor, for example. With the help of German native speakers, the English version of the questionnaire was translated into German (cf. Appendix 6).

The first two questions related to the realism of the situations chosen and the following two to informants' analysis of social distance and social dominance. Here social distance was measured via the question "How well does the offerer/requester know *x*?", and social dominance via a question as to the status of the offerer/requester relative to the refuser/person requested. Relative imposition, although not assessed in the English assessment questionnaire, was in hindsight recognised as being of value in the analysis of the data. Consequently, a number of questions relating to imposition were included on the German questionnaire which was administered at a later stage than the English questionnaire. Although not comparable with having information on both languages given that the relative weight of such factors varies with culture, it was felt that such information would nevertheless provide some indication of the possible degree of imposition associated with the realisation of particular speech acts in particular situations. The degree of obligation of the hearer to comply with a request and the right of a speaker to pose a particular

request were investigated in the present study, these having been found to be important in the realisation of requests in German (cf. Blum-Kulka/House 1989: 141ff). The obligation to issue a particular offer was taken as a guide as to the relative imposition of a particular offer and the relative difficulty in refusing, a guide to the imposition associated with a particular refusal (cf. Appendix 6).¹⁴ It is clear that these values only provide a possible indication of the degree of imposition inherent in a particular speech act. A detailed analysis of the correlations of various factors with different realisations of particular speech acts is needed — however, the developmental focus of the present study did not allow for such an analysis.

On the basis of the information elicited in the assessment questionnaire, mean values for each scale were calculated, and subsequently also rank values. This meant, for example, that a value of 4.26 in the assessment of social dominance in the lift situation in the Irish English NS data indicated that the status of the offerer (a professor in this case) was judged by Irish English NS to be 4.26 on a scale of 1 to 5, where 4 corresponded to “a little higher in status” and 5 to “higher status” (cf. Appendix 7). Of course — this assessment can also be interpreted in terms of the refuser, in this case a student. In this case the refuser would have between “a little lower” and a “lower” status relative to the professor.

4.1.1.1.2 *Situational descriptions.* Although not representing situations which all informants would have experienced on several occasions, an unrealistic goal in itself, the data elicited on the frequency and realism of the situations does suggest that any possible reactivity effects which may have resulted from changes in the informants caused by the measurements themselves can be largely disregarded.¹⁵

The mean values presented in Appendix 7 for the assessment of the realism of the situations employed in the present DCT/FDCT reveal that both German and Irish English NS informants found the offer/refusal and request situations to be realistic. In no case was the mean value for whether informants could imagine the situation or not lower than 1.5 on a scale of 1–2 where 2 represented “realistic” and 1 “unrealistic.” Indeed, most values were considerably higher — the average value for all offer situations taken together being 1.76 for the Irish English NS and 1.82 for the German NS. In the case of the request situations, the estimated degree of realism was even higher with an average value for all eight request situations of 1.84 for the Irish English NS and 1.95 for the three new request situations for the German NS.

The second question was similar to the first but related specifically to the frequency of occurrence of each particular situation. The German NS found all three new request situations to be between everyday and relatively common occurrences — with an average value of 1.84 (“relatively common”). Similar results were found for the Irish English NS. While the police and presentation situations approached the assessment “seldom” in this dataset, the average assessment was 2.06 (“relatively common”). The assessment of offers/refusals of offers yielded

similar assessment values. None of the situations selected by either German or Irish English NS were judged to never occur. Both the Irish English NS and German NS judged the lift and work experience as approaching “seldom”. All other offer/refusal situations were assessed as being “relatively common”, with an overall average value for the Irish English and German NS of “relatively common”.

In the following, the situations employed in both the DCT and FDCT are briefly described with reference to the assessments elicited, starting with the DCT request situations. The English version of the questionnaire is referred to here (i.e., concerning names, etc.). An overview of the situations is included in Appendix 3; the situations themselves are to be found in Appendix 5 in both languages, and the assessment values for each situation are in Appendix 7.

DCT request situations

Kitchen situation

In this CCSARP situation, Declan, John’s flatmate, has had a party the night before and has left the kitchen in their student flat in a mess. John asks him to clear up the mess. He agrees, saying he will start soon.

This situation highlights the role of situational power in the calculation of social dominance in both cultures. Here the flatmate who requests the kitchen be cleaned has a mean status of 3.75 in the German data and 3.5 in the Irish data, both representing “a little higher” on the scale of 1–5 — although an assessment of social factors alone would suggest a symmetrical relationship. In this situation, German NS view the hearer as having an obligation to comply with the request in question and the requester as having a strong right to pose the request.

Some cultural differences are to be noted here. The social distance between the flatmates in the Irish context is judged to be lower (4.65 on a scale of 1–5 where 5 represents “very well”) than in the German case (3.72 on the same scale).

Telephone situation

Here Maria is standing outside a public telephone booth waiting to make a short call home when she realises that she does not have enough change for the call. She decides to ask another girl who is standing nearby for change. She is refused, however, since her interlocutor needs all the change she has.

Maria’s right to pose this request is seen as rather high. However, of the request situations investigated, the requester’s right is third lowest in this situation. The obligation to comply with the request is low at 2.34 where 2 represents “no obligation”. Indeed, this situation is that with the lowest obligation to comply. Social distance in this situation is positive, neither interlocutor knowing the other. As regards social dominance, the power of situational factors can also be seen in this situation — rather than the relationship being symmetrical, as one may assume given the situational description, the social dominance of the requester is judged to

be somewhat less in this situation in both cultures due — it is to be suggested — to the fact that the requester does not have something which her interlocutor has.

Notes situation

Students are informed in this CCSARP situation that Anne has missed a class at the university the day before and would like to borrow Jane's notes. Jane agrees, but reminds Anne that she would like them back before the class next week.

Social dominance is viewed as symmetrical in both societies and Anne is seen as having a right to request the notes and Jane no real obligation to comply with the request. Cultural differences are revealed in the social distance values. In this situation the Irish English NS judge the interlocutors as knowing each other well, however, in the same situation in the German NS data, the interlocutors are thought to know each other only fairly well. This difference may be suggested to reflect the rather more individualistic German education system in which cliques are less likely to form given the fact that different students take part in different courses in different semesters. In the Irish system, on the other hand, students are informed each year which courses to attend — the result is that the same group of students meet regularly and get to know each other well.

Drive situation

In this CCSARP item, informants are told that Jack has just missed his bus after a union meeting and that the next one is not due for an hour. As he knows that the couple next to him, whom he knows only by sight, live in the same street as he does and also that they have come by car, he asks them for a lift home. They, however, refuse, saying they are not going home straight away.

These colleagues do not know each other well. In addition, according to the assessment questionnaire, Jack, who requests a lift home from his colleagues, is not seen as equal in power to these colleagues. Instead, the person requesting is seen as having a lower degree of power relative to the owner of the car, and his dominance is, therefore, estimated to be correspondingly lower. This assessment is more pronounced in the German than in the Irish English NS data. As regards the relative imposition in this situation, both the obligation to comply with the request and the right to pose the request are low in the German NS data.

Application form situation

In this situation, Jim has just seen an advertisement for a job he would like during the summer holidays. He decides to apply and rings the personnel manager for an application form.

Social distance exists in this situation since the interlocutors do not know each other. Furthermore, as would perhaps be expected, there is social dominance recorded, with Jim of a somewhat lower status than the personnel manager. Jim is seen as having a strong right to request the application form, and the personnel manager as having no real obligation to send him the form.

Police situation

Informants are told in this CCSARP situation that Margaret is driving into town when she notices a house on fire in front of her. She pulls into the side, parks and is walking towards the house when a policeman comes up to her and asks her to move her car, telling her that an ambulance is expected to arrive any minute. She complies with his request.

The obligation to comply with this particular request is judged by German NS to be strong and the right to pose the request is also high. It is noteworthy that in the German assessments, social dominance is rated higher than in the Irish English NS data in this situation. The policeman requesting has a mean status of 4.58 (“high status”) in the German NS data, compared to a “fairly high status” (3.53) in the Irish data. The differences observed in this situation appear to support O’Reilly’s (1999:36) observation that there is a preference in Germany for “... well-defined structures, with heavy emphasis in organisational terms on rules, procedures and formality” which contrasts with the Irish “... ‘village market’ culture...” where there is a lower adherence to formal rules.

Grammar situation

Here informants are told that Mary has not been able to attend college recently due to ill health. As a result, she is having problems understanding a particular grammar point. She mentions these difficulties to the lecturer and is given a book by the lecturer to consult.

Social dominance is found to be the same in both cultures with the student being viewed as somewhat lower in status to the lecturer. Similarly, the lecturer is felt to be fairly well known. Although the German NS assessment data showed that the student has a right to pose the request, the obligation to comply was somewhat lower at 3.08, a value representing “no real obligation”.

Presentation situation

In this CCSARP situation, we are told that Lisa Nolan teaches ancient history. When preparing her classes for the next few weeks, she realises that a paper which a student was due to present on Aristotle’s theory of the state in two weeks’ time, would fit in much better at next week’s session. She decides to give this student, Tony, a ring. He agrees, rather unhappily, to comply with her request.

Social distance in this situation is viewed to be largely similar to the previous situation — the university teacher and student being judged to know each other fairly well. Here also there is a status differential to be noted between the interlocutors, with the status of the teacher, the requester, viewed as somewhat higher to that of the student in the Irish English NS data. However, in the German NS data, situational factors appear to have been at play since the status of both parties is regarded as relatively equal. As regards the obligation to comply with the request, this is seen as not particularly high (2.78 where 3 represents “no real obligation” on a scale of 1–5). The right to pose the request is equally low at 3.45 (i.e., “no real right”).

*FDCT offer/refusal situations**Accident situation*

In this situation, students are told that they have been knocked off their bicycle by a car on their way to college. The driver of the car, a priest, offers to drive them to the hospital. However they feel fine and refuse. The priest starts the dialogue by apologising and asking the student if s/he is all right upon which the student says yes, fine.

Respondents on the assessment questionnaire were of the opinion that there is an obligation to offer in this situation. The assessment value was relatively high at 4 where 4 corresponds to there being an obligation to offer. It can be suggested that this is so due to a strong possibility that the student may have injured him/herself after being knocked down.

Some cultural differences are noteworthy in the evaluations of social distance in this situation — the assessment data shows that the offerer here — a priest — was judged to be better known in the Irish English NS data than in the German NS data. In the former dataset, the value for social distance given was 1.7 on a scale of familiarity of 1–5 where 1 corresponded to “not at all” and 5 “very well”. In the German NS data on the other hand, the value was 1. This difference is thought to stem from the overall greater importance of the Church in the Irish speech community and therefore also from the higher attendance of services. As a result, priests, although usually not personal acquaintances, may be known by sight. Similarly, in the assessment of social dominance, the priest has a somewhat higher status than the victim of the accident in the Irish English data — in the German data, on the other hand, he has the same status.

Beverage situation

Informants are told that they are alone in the house. Their uncle happens to be in the area and calls in. They invite him in and offer him a cup of tea, but he refuses. The conversation starts with the student telling the uncle that the rest of the family are not in.

The assessment of social distance in the beverage situation reflects the rather more tight-knit family networks generally found in Ireland compared to Germany. Here the uncle is judged as being known “well” to the offerer in the Irish data (mean value = 4.36) and only “fairly well” in the German data (mean value = 3.3) despite identical situational descriptions.

The obligation to offer is 2.73 on the scale of 1–5 where 3 represents “no real obligation” and 2 represents “no obligation”. It is suggested, however, that the level of obligation may be different in an Irish culture given the fact that not to be offered some tea or coffee upon visiting someone is viewed as extremely impolite. As Hayes (1997:51) notes in his guide to conversation in Ireland: “Hospitality in the home is not an act of kindness; it is a duty”.

Lift situation

Here students are requested to imagine that they are at a guest lecture. After this lecture, they and a friend are talking to one of their professors. Just as it is time to go home, the professor remembers that they both live near him and so he offers to give them a lift home. They refuse. The professor starts the conversation by saying that it is about time he was getting home.

This particular situation transpired to be that with the highest level of social dominance in both languages over all offer/refusal situations. The offerer, the professor, has a higher status in this situation relative to the interlocutor. However, here too, cross-cultural differences are to be seen. A value of 4.26 in the assessment of social dominance on a scale of 1 to 5, where 4 corresponded to “a little higher in status” and 5 to “higher status” was recorded in the Irish English NS data. This value is somewhat higher than that of the German NS value of 3.87 — i.e., in this case the German informants do not appear to show as much respect to the professor.

This situation was seen by German NS as the situation in which an offer was least expected, i.e., where the obligation to offer, at a value of 2 (“no obligation”), was the lowest of all situations. The difficulty in refusing was not found to be particularly high, being of a value of 2.61 where 3 represented “no real difficulty” and 2 “no difficulty”.

Work experience situation

In this situation, students are told that they have just started a traineeship in a large company. During the coffee break on their second day there, they overhear their boss talking about how weak her son is at economics in school. As they study economics, they offer to help but their boss refuses.

This is an example of an $x < y$ situation in both cultures where the offerer, x , is of a lower status. In addition, it can be suggested that this is a particularly face-threatening situation as the obligation to offer is very low (2.3, where 2 represents “no obligation”) given that the trainee had only overheard the information. The difficulty in refusing is also relatively low at 2.43, where 2 represents “no difficulty”.

Bag situation

Informants are asked to imagine that they are in an airport in this situation. They see a girl their own age with two huge bags. As they have not much luggage themselves, they offer to help, but she refuses.

The mean social distance value was very low among the Irish NS and German NS data in this situation — signalling that neither interlocutor knows the other. Also social dominance was found to be symmetrical in both cultures at a level of approximately 3 (“same status”). The German NS did not regard the offer as being necessary. The difficulty in refusing was not found to be difficult.

Maths situation

Here students are told that the end of term maths exam is next week. John, a good

friend of theirs, mentions that he is worried about it as he finds maths difficult. The informants are required to offer him help, an offer which John refuses. The dialogue starts with John talking about his worries concerning the examination.

The Irish English NS mean value for social distance was 4.26, the German NS value 4.08 in this situation — in other words, the interlocutors were judged to know each other well in both cultures. In addition, the situation represents an example of the situational constellation $x=y$ where both interlocutors, x and y , are of equal status. The obligation to offer and the difficulty in refusing are found to be second highest in this situation after the accident situation with values of 3.13 and 3.25 respectively on a scale of 1–5 where 1 represents “no obligation or difficulty at all” and 5 a “strong obligation or difficulty”.

The assessments of social distance and social dominance reflect a wide range of situational constellations, with social distance ranging from neither interlocutor knowing the other (cf., e.g., the bag situation) to a situation where the interlocutors know each other well — as in the maths situation, for example. Similarly, the rankings of social dominance in the request and also offer and refusal situations include constellations of the form $x=y$, $x>y$ and $x<y$, where x is the speaker and y the hearer. While the bag and maths situations represent examples of $x=y$ where both interlocutors are of equal status, the work experience situation is an example of an $x<y$ situation where the offerer is of lower status and the lift situation represents a situation where the offerer is of higher status relative to the interlocutor. Overall, the rankings of social distance in both the German and Irish English datasets were broadly similar for the offer/refusal and request situations. However, some cultural differences in the evaluations of social distance were noteworthy despite Hassall's (1997: 61) comment that “... values of social distance ... tend to be transparent ...” — hence, according to Hassall, the lack of need to investigate how such values are assessed. Similarly, some cross-cultural differences are to be noted in the social dominance rankings.

Imposition in the offer/refusal of offer situations ranges from a high obligation to offer and a large difficulty in refusing the particular offer in question in the accident situation to a low obligation to offer and a low difficulty in refusing in the work experience situation. Similarly, differences in the degree of imposition are also recorded in the request situations. House (1989a: 106) differentiates between standard and non-standard request situations — both opposing poles on a continuum. A relatively high obligation to comply with a request, a relatively low degree of difficulty in performing the request and a high right to pose the particular request are features associated with standard situations. The opposite features describe non-standard situations although these descriptions are relative — representing a continuum — rather than absolute. Based on the present assessment data, the notes, drive, telephone, grammar and presentation situations can be categorised as

non-standard situations, and the kitchen, police and application form situations as standard situations. However, it should be noted here that the application form situation, although a standard situation, does not reflect the same degree of standardness as the kitchen and police situations. This is evident in the fact that both the obligation and right values are somewhat lower than those of the kitchen and police situations.

4.1.1.2 *Pre- and post-year abroad questionnaires*

The primary function of the pre- and post-year abroad questionnaires was to elicit factual information about the year abroad group. A secondary function was in providing possible insights which might aid the interpretation of the production data elicited (cf. 4.1.1).

Factual information was collected in a number of key areas on the pre-year abroad questionnaire (cf. Appendix 1).¹⁶ Part I, entitled “Personal details”, and also Part II, “Language skills”, were designed to elicit basic information in order to investigate the homogeneity of the informants and to facilitate a description of the main group. Details included questions as to participants’ age, sex, number of years studying German and level of German. Such information pertaining to the students’ level of German was elicited via subjective evaluations gathered by means of a closed question where informants were asked to judge their foreign language proficiency level on a scale of 1–6 (“near native” to “very poor”).¹⁷

In addition, one of the primary functions of these two sections on the pre-year abroad questionnaire was to ensure homogeneity concerning exposure to other languages or cultures. Such information was accessed via the inclusion of questions as to informants’ L1(s), their nationality, their parents’ nationalities, possible attendance at Irish immersion schools (*Gaelscoileanna*) or at the German school in Dublin, other languages, the level of competence in each of these languages, and lengths of stay in countries outside Ireland. Students who were found, based on these questions, to have had extended contact with other cultures or languages were excluded from the study. This precaution was necessary as far as the internal validity of the study was concerned since any substantial contact with other languages or cultures would have rendered results incomparable, especially with regard to the concept of pragmatic transfer.

Part 4, “The year abroad”, concerned practical details, such as the year abroad program/scholarship, whether Erasmus, PAD or DAAD in which the students were interested, and also, if Erasmus or DAAD, the relevant German or Austrian university. Students’ answers to these questions helped the researcher ascertain who would or would not be a possible informant — as individuals on the PAD program or those studying in Austria were not included in the project (cf. 3.3.2.1 on PAD).¹⁸ The final details were obtained from official departmental lists.

Questions designed to tap students' awareness of L2 pragmatic issues were also included on the pre-year abroad questionnaire. Part 3 of the pre-year abroad questionnaire, "Cultural differences", served to establish previous awareness of cultural differences/biases, for example. It was, however, necessary, to keep this section as general as possible in order to ensure students were not alerted to the focus of the study. Questions included, for example, students being requested to volunteer labels to describe the German people or to comment on differences in the German or Irish use of language.

The design of the post-year abroad questionnaire (cf. Appendix 2) was not unlike that of the pre-year abroad questionnaire. Factual information was elicited on part I, "The year abroad". The details required related to the length of time students had actually been in Germany and the approximate degree of contact they had had with the German language (i.e., time spent reading/listening to/speaking German and also information pertaining to language courses/private study).

Information on awareness of cultural differences was gathered in part II, "Cultural differences". Unfortunately, however, the nature of these questions had of necessity to be very general given that the final data collection session had not yet taken place and also that the researcher did not wish to disclose the specific focus of the project. Nonetheless, some material elicited here was of interest to the focus of the project. The question requesting informants to suggest labels to describe the German people provided interesting results, for example, when compared with those volunteered prior to the year abroad. Other questions related to learners' opinions of the desirability of adopting the L2 norm.

The format of both the pre- and post-year abroad questionnaires was based broadly on those employed by the Department of German in University College Dublin for a previous year abroad study (cf. Walsh 1995). The draft versions were then pre-tested.¹⁹ The format of the questionnaires was kept as simple and as short as possible and the questionnaires were written in English, the L1 of the students. Wherever feasible, questions were closed or structured in order to facilitate analysis, with open or unstructured questions appearing mainly only in the cultural differences sections. The advantages of such closed questions is highlighted by Wolf (1988:481) who advocates that most questions on a questionnaire should be closed. The reasons given relate to the fact that despite the rich and spontaneous responses elicited by unstructured (open) questions, informants may become overburdened and uncooperative with such questions.

4.1.1.3 *Retrospective interviews*

Metapragmatic data refers to data pertaining to a speaker's awareness of and ability to clearly express rules of speaking. Two types of metapragmatic data are to be distinguished, namely data concerned with pragmalinguistic judgements:

... Urteile über die Angemessenheit sprachlicher Handlungsstrategien und Redemittel in gegebenen Kontexten (pragmalinguistische Urteile) ...

(Kasper 1998a:86)

(judgements about the appropriateness of linguistic strategies and phrases in given contexts (pragmalinguistic judgements) ...),

and also sociopragmatic judgements:

... [Urteile] über die Ausprägung bestimmter Kontextfaktoren in vorgegeben[en] Situationen (sociopragmatische Urteile) ... (Kasper 1998a:86)

([judgements] about the presence of certain contextual factors in given situations (sociopragmatic judgements) ...)

Metapragmatic data elicited from the learners in the present study is employed to examine pragmalinguistic aspects of learners' developing pragmatic knowledge, in particular, while the concentration of the native speaker metapragmatic assessment data elicited (cf. 4.1.1.1.1) was sociopragmatic in nature.

In the following, the concentration is on the elicitation of metapragmatic data relating to pragmalinguistic norms. Kasper (1998a: 101) divides the most frequently employed instruments in this regard into two broad categories: (a) controlled methods of elicitation and (b) free methods of elicitation. Controlled methods of elicitation encompass a range of instruments including multiple choice questionnaires, the paired comparisons method, card sorting and rating scales. Although these instruments are suited to hypothesis-testing, they are quite restrictive and do not allow informants to reflect on their own productions. They were, therefore, not employed in the present study.

Free methods of elicitation, in contrast, are very flexible and thus suitable for both exploratory research and also hypothesis testing. They usually take the form of a narrative self-report, which itself can take many shapes, depending on the research question. Widespread forms include simultaneous diary entries, think aloud protocols (TAPs), interviews and retrospective interviews. Retrospective interviews were employed in the present study. The reasons for this choice of instrument are best detailed by briefly discussing the lack of suitability of other possible free methods of collecting such metapragmatic data.

Learner diaries

Learner diaries, such as those employed by Meyer (in progress), were not employed in this study due to their intrusiveness, the large degree of co-operation they require of informants and above all, due to the fact that their efficient employment would have necessitated enlightening students as to the pragmatic focus of the study, and, thereby possibly triggered a Hawthorne effect (cf. 4.1.2 on the Hawthorne effect). This latter issue of the need to draw foreign language learners' awareness to the

focus of the study in order to gain meaningful data on pragmatic issues is highlighted in a study undertaken by Bardovi-Harlig/Dörnyei (1998). These researchers found that Hungarian and Italian EFL learners were more sensitive to grammatically incorrect but pragmatically appropriate utterances than pragmatically inappropriate but grammatically correct utterances possibly due to the emphasis placed on grammar in the educational context. Without appropriate instructions, therefore, it is likely that requesting students to keep a journal of their language learning experiences would have elicited much information on their grammatical progress. Pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic features, as so often noted, are rather seen, at least at an early stage in the target speech community, as relating to the personality of the speakers concerned and not necessarily to the language (cf. 1) — consequently it is doubtful, whether students would include these rather personal issues in a diary — particularly without being explicitly encouraged to do so.

Think aloud protocol (TAP)

The simultaneous think aloud protocol, a type of “self-revelation” (Cohen 1996c: 7), is used exclusively in conjunction with written tasks, as it involves “... the simultaneous verbalization of concurrent thoughts” (Robinson 1992: 32). Although it does provide researchers with an insight into informants’ thought processes when completing a particular task (e.g., Robinson 1992 illustrated this fact in her use of TAPs in her pragmatically-oriented study of refusals), it is conceivable that such reports may affect informants’ performance in completing a particular task either positively — due to more thought being given to the task — or negatively — due to cognitive overload. Consequently, in the present study, such introspection would have had to have been conducted at all three stages of data collection during the year abroad — otherwise the comparability of the data elicited would have been limited. In any case, Robinson (1992) used both TAPs and retrospective interviews and found consecutive reports to be better than concurrent reports (i.e., TAPs) in the elicitation of information on the views which steered informants’ planning decisions.

Interviews

A further method of eliciting metapragmatic data is to question respondents as to the way in which they use language or as to the way in which language is used by the target speech community. The resulting generalised statements pertaining to the learner him/herself can be classified as self-reports in Cohen’s (1996c: 7) terms, since the respondent is generalising his/her behaviour with no direct relation to his/her actual use of language. Undoubtedly, such interviews highlight subjects’ awareness of particular issues addressed. However, it is also clear that the validity of such reports may be somewhat questionable as learners may report doing that which they think the researcher wants to hear (i.e., subject expectancy, cf. Brown 1988: 33 and 4.1.2).

Retrospective interviews

The retrospective interview, like the TAP, is a particular type of verbal report or introspection where an informant analyses his/her own thought processes based on instructions or probes given by a researcher following completion of a particular task. In other words, retrospection can be described as a type of self-observation (cf. Cohen 1996c: 7), meaning that reports are not generalised statements (as is usually the case in interviews), but rather refer directly to actual instances of language use. Apart from allowing researchers to gain some insight into informants' awareness of pragmatic issues, they also enable the researcher to focus informants on actual conscious deviations from or adherence to L2 pragmalinguistic norms in their own oral productions. Robinson (1992), for example, in a study concentrating on the use of TAPs and retrospective interviews in researching interlanguage pragmatic knowledge, collected reports which documented difficulties which Japanese non-native speakers of American English experienced in saying "no" as a result of sociopragmatic transfer (cf. Robinson 1992: 57).

Retrospective interviews were used in the present study despite not being without disadvantages, such as the relatively high degree of intrusion, the possible repression of data (cf. Cohen 1991: 136), the lack of intersubjectively replicable results (cf. Grotjahn 1987: 68) and the inevitable researcher bias (cf. Robinson 1992: 38). They were employed to examine the process of realising the speech acts under investigation, but primarily to investigate the validity of any findings with regard to developments in exchange structure. The form of retrospection employed can, in fact, be described as being some way between a self-report (cf. interview above) and a retrospective interview in that while it relates to a concrete performance on the part of the speaker, it does not focus exclusively on those thoughts processed during performance of the particular responses in question. As introspective methods, and indeed retrospective interviews themselves, vary greatly in form, it is useful to categorise the particular type employed in this study using the classificatory framework for introspective methods developed by Faerch/Kasper (1987a: 10ff). Table 5 provides an overview.

As is clear from Table 5, informants in the present study were first required to participate in a number of videotaped roleplays (cf. 4.1.2 for details on the format of the roleplays employed). Following this step, each of these roleplays was replayed to the particular learner informant on video so as to provide contextual information to allow recall of the particular situation. After each of the individual video-clips, the tape was stopped and informants were invited to retrospect on their performance in this particular clip via probes given by the researcher. As such, the retrospection was immediately consecutive. This was in line with research by Börsch (1986: 205) and Cohen (1996b: 260) who note that verbal reports are more reliable if the reporting takes place shortly after the mental events.²⁰

Table 5. Categorisation of retrospective self-report employed in present study

Category	Possibilities	Present study
1. Object of retrospection	(a) Cognitive/affective/social aspects	(a) Cognitive aspects: learners' pragmatic knowledge, Affective aspects: attitudes towards the L2 norm, Social aspects: the impact of social experiences on such attitudes
	(b) Declarative/procedural knowledge	(b) Declarative: knowledge of L2 rules
	(c) Modality of language use	(c) Oral production
	(d) Continuous process/specific aspect	(d) Continuous: general thoughts, Specific: prompts employed
2. Relation to concrete action	+/- related to concrete action	+: Focus is on roleplays in which respondents have just participated
3. Temporal relationship to action	Simultaneous/immediately consecutive/delayed consecutive	Immediately consecutive
4. Informant training	+/-	-: Previous studies show no need for prior training in retrospection (cf. Faerch/Kasper 1987a: 15)
5. Elicitation procedure	(a) Degree of structure	(a) Semi-structured (cf. probe sheet — Appendix 9)
	(b) Media support: +/-	(b) +: Video-recording of roleplays
	(c) Self-/other-initiated	(c) Other-initiated: explicit request to retrospect
	(d) Interaction between informant and experimenter/between informants: +/-	(d) +: Individual interviews, interaction between interviewer and participant
	(e) Integration with action: +/-	(e) -: Clearly separated from action (retrospective)
	(f) Interference with action: +/-	(f) -: Took place immediately after the roleplays; no prior mention of interviews
6. Combination of methods	+/-	+: Combined with production data, self-report data (post-year abroad questionnaires)

The use of prompts to focus retrospection is currently standard in the use of verbal reporting techniques (cf. Cohen 1996c: 11). The probes designed to investigate participants' knowledge of and perceptions of pragmatic phenomena in the present self-report were developed based on categories originally designed by Robinson (1992) in her evaluation of verbal reports as a means of investigating interlanguage pragmatic knowledge (cf. categories 1–5, Appendix 9).²¹ Within these categories, a number of questions were adopted from Robinson and a number

developed for the present study. The latter questions not only related to information available from participants' memory, i.e., to that which had been attended to during task performance; they also probed informants' metapragmatic awareness, asking them, for example, whether they would have said the same thing in English, their L1, as they had just said in German. Also, a question was included asking informants whether they had consciously changed their behaviour relative to previous enactments of the particular situation over time (roleplays had initially been included in the research design and so had been carried out on a previous occasion (cf. 4.1.1, endnote 1)). The function of this probe was to investigate any possible practice effects as a result of students consulting native speakers or reference materials on problems they had experienced on previous occasions. An additional category of probes (probe category no. 6) relating specifically to the present project was also included to control for this effect. This probe attempted to ascertain whether students had discussed the particular situations with German NS. It may, namely, have been that students' participation in the research project had made them curious of possible pragmatic differences leading them to discuss the speech acts under investigation with German NS. A positive answer to this question would have limited the extent to which results could be generalised.

After pre-tests carried out in the University of Hamburg, the probes set out in Appendix 9 were employed in the retrospective interviews conducted.²² The specific probes ranged from a very unstructured opening question ("What went through your mind while doing the roleplay?"), to a variety of semi-structured, open questions. All questions were formulated in a simple, brief and unambiguous manner so as not to overburden respondents and a relatively large degree of flexibility was built into the interview to avoid the superficiality which can occur when one is overly dependent on interview questions (cf. Hron 1982: 121 *passim* on interview questioning). All interviews were conducted in English, the native language of both the interviewer and the students, despite the fact that the researcher was fluent in both languages and all students were given the choice as to which language they would prefer. That all students chose their L1 contrasts with the choice made by the Japanese students of American English interviewed by Robinson (1992), who all chose to speak in their L2, English. However, the researcher in Robinson's case was a NS of English. The fact that the interviewer in the present study was a native speaker of Irish English, as were the learners, was seen as an advantage as students felt free to use their native language and were, thus, more adept at communicating their difficulties and thoughts (cf. Cohen/Olshtain 1993: 49, Robinson 1992: 67f). Indeed, it is likely that the students would not have been as open in expressing their opinions of differences between the German and Irish cultures had a German NS been present.

The retrospective data was replayed by the researcher and information relevant to the present project transcribed. As the interest was on content rather than form,

transcription conventions were not strictly adhered to. A sample of the retrospection is included in Appendix 12.

4.1.2 Data collection

Neither the native speaker nor the learner informants in the present study were alerted to the focus of the study during the data collection process in order to attempt to avoid a possible Hawthorne effect which would have negatively affected the internal validity of the study (cf. Masterson 1997).²³ Subject expectancy, i.e., when subjects give the researcher what they think s/he wants (cf. Brown 1988:33), would also have been a potential danger. Indeed, it is likely that these effects influenced the present data in some way since informants may have guessed at the nature of the study and increased their use of whatever feature they thought was the focus of interest when completing the questionnaires and also possibly paid more attention to it during their time in the target speech community. From comments made by students, it appears, however, that they believed the focus of the project to be of a grammatical nature — not surprising given the strong emphasis on this area of competence in the curriculum of the home Department of German at the time. Some comments from native speakers, on the other hand, pointed to a belief that colloquialisms were the focus of interest. This belief may have stemmed from the directions given to use spoken language when completing the questionnaires.

In the following, practical details concerning the collection of data are outlined for each method of elicitation. Let us start chronologically with the pre-year abroad questionnaire.

Pre-year abroad questionnaire

This questionnaire was administered in mid-February 1997 in a formal setting at a week-end seminar organised by the Department of German in University College Dublin for students interested in embarking on a study abroad period. The objective of this seminar was to inform students about the year abroad and to prepare them for potential difficulties. It was held prior to the allocation of study places in the target speech community. Thirty minutes were allocated for completion of the questionnaire, the upper time limit for completion of such questionnaires before fatigue sets in and co-operation wanes, according to Wolf (1988:479). Students were simply told that the information elicited would be used for research purposes only, was confidential, and would in no way affect their performance in the department. It was explained that names were required on the forms for purposes of follow-up research. The researcher, who was a tutor in the Department of German at the time, and who was also involved in the organisation of the weekend seminar, was present to answer any questions.

This pre-year abroad questionnaire was completed by fifty-nine students in total, twenty-six of whom were found to be unsuitable for inclusion in the project, following information elicited in this questionnaire concerning relative homogeneity due to accepting a place in an Austrian university (cf. 4.2.1) or to them deciding against the year abroad programme. While the majority of the thirty-three students who did participate in the present research project completed the questionnaire during the weekend seminar described, a small number who completed the production questionnaires were asked to complete the pre-year abroad questionnaire in their own time some time prior to departure as they had not been present at the voluntary weekend.

DCT/FDCT

The DCT and FDCT were distributed to both native speaker groups once and to the study abroad group on three separate occasions over a period of fifteen months, namely prior to (L(1) data), during (L(2) data) and towards the end (L(3) data) of the year abroad. The function of the L(2) data was to determine whether any particular aspects of pragmatic competence developed quicker than other aspects, i.e., to investigate developmental phases, and also to increase the reliability of findings. The L(1) data was collected in April 1997, the L(2) data in late November 1997 after the students had been in the study abroad setting approximately two months. Finally, the L(3) data was gathered in June 1998, at the end of the students' study abroad period. As such, there was a period of approximately seven months between each data collection session. This rather long period can be seen as advantageous since it is unlikely that informants were able to remember what they had written in the previous task — any possible practice effects were thus reduced. Practice effects result from completing the same test on a number of occasions (cf. Brown 1988: 35, Polson 1999). They involve improvements in the data elicited due to possible consultation of either native speakers or reference materials to attempt to alleviate any difficulties experienced completing the questionnaire on a previous occasion. This effect, Brown (1988: 35) notes, is particularly relevant where subject expectancy is at play, i.e., where students know or guess at the nature of the project and attempt to "help" the researcher out. In order to further offset the possibility of this effect influencing the present data, it would have been preferable to have engaged in counterbalancing as suggested by Brown (1988: 38). Counterbalancing involves ensuring that no individual completes the same task twice — this would have meant issuing two different but comparable tests to each half of the group of thirty-three informants at the beginning of the study and then issuing the opposite forms to these same groups at the end of the study, thus halving the overall number of informants completing each situation. Had the researcher had access to more informants, this would have been a possible method of increasing the internal

validity of the research design since when averaged, the data would have been comparative and would have enabled analysis of development over time. This was not, however, the case given that all the informants participating were needed to ensure the validity of the findings. Access to an additional group of students from another university was not possible at the time. Despite not engaging in counterbalancing, it can, however, be proposed that the practice effect was not an important consideration in the present study since apart from the large time span for data collection, informants were not aware of the pragmatic focus of the study. Indeed, answers to the question included in the retrospective interviews as to whether the informants did anything consciously different after having enacted the situation a number of times over the year abroad indicated that the majority of informants could not remember what they had said on previous occasions. Any positive answers referred merely to the content rather than the linguistic form of previous responses. In addition, answers to the question included in the retrospective interview as to whether learners had discussed any situations with NS yielded negative answers.

All instructions on the DCT and FDCT were given in the language in which the items were written. In other words, the learner informants were required to read the instructions in their L2 as it has been suggested that this may enhance the responses elicited (cf. Olshtain/Cohen 1983:32). Indeed, Bardovi-Harlig (1999b:252) notes that descriptions in the L1 may lead to an increase in cognitive load for informants when the task is to be completed in the L2. Disadvantages of L2 descriptions are, of course, on the one hand that students may be encouraged to “lift”, i.e., to use phrases or lexis found in the description (cf. Hoffman-Hicks 1999:76), or, alternatively that, as Code/Anderson (2001) report, results may be skewed due to an incorrect interpretation of the situation. Despite the advanced level of the learners and the belief that they would not find the directions or situational descriptions overly problematic, it was decided to include a vocabulary gloss with vocabulary found to be problematic in the pre-tests in order to avoid any problems due to a lack of understanding.

Distractor situations were not included on the questionnaires distributed to either the native speakers or learners. Their inclusion, although desirable in that they increase the naturalness of informants’ behaviour by preventing skimming of situational descriptions (e.g., “Ah, they’re all requests anyhow”), would have further lengthened the questionnaire and thus also the elicitation time. Nonetheless, it can be suggested that informants were forced to read the situational descriptions since they were confronted with two types of items to complete and also a variety of speech acts (apologies were also included in the original research design, cf. 4.1.1).

Taking the DCT and FDCT together, there were a total of twenty-two items to be completed by all respondents, namely six FDCT situations and eight each of request and apology situations (cf. 4.1.1 on apologies). Completion time at

approximately sixty-five minutes was thought to be quite long — as a result, the items were divided between two questionnaires where possible and the data gathered in two sittings in an effort to increase the quality and, thus, also validity of the resulting data.

The L(1) data was elicited from the core year abroad group in a formal setting in University College Dublin in early April 1997 in two separate sittings. As both sittings took place during class-time, no extra demands were placed on students' free time at this stage of the project. The questionnaire was posted with the glossary of terms to a small number of students who were not present for one or other of these sittings but who had completed the pre-year abroad questionnaire and one of the production questionnaires. Each questionnaire was accompanied by an example, which was explained by the particular tutor present following guidelines laid out by the researcher. A glossary of terms was also displayed using an overhead projector (cf. Appendix 4). Tutors present merely informed students that research was being conducted into the year abroad and that all questionnaires were confidential and would have no effect on their subsequent progress in the department. Tutors did not interfere with students, although they were free to answer any questions which might have resulted. In this way, subjects did not feel they were being controlled or watched. The researcher was either present or contactable at all times, moving between rooms in the first production questionnaire data collection session and present in the larger second sitting in order to ensure the reliability of the procedure (cf. Lienert/Raatz 1994: 165f).

The second data elicitation setting (L(2) data) took place in late November 1997 in Ludwigshafen in Germany at the students' annual home departmental year-abroad seminar. The year abroad students, who at that time had already been in Germany for approximately two months, travelled from their various host institutions to attend the seminar. The seminar itself was carried out by a departmental lecturer who was assisted by the present researcher. Time was set aside for the research project during this weekend and again the DCT and FDCT were distributed in a formal setting — along with the same glossary of terms mentioned above and the same guidelines for completion. A small number of informants who did not attend the seminar were contacted by the researcher and requested to complete the questionnaire in their own time.

The final data collection (L(3) data) took place in June 1998. This was more difficult to organise than the previous data collection sessions since the students were scattered around Germany and it proved quite difficult to contact them despite the possibility of email communication. The researcher met all students at their host university or in their student residences. The questionnaires were completed in the presence of the researcher to ensure no German native speaker could be consulted. Although it would have been preferable to have informants complete the questionnaires in a formal setting as in L(1) and L(2), this was not possible. Again, the vocabulary glossary and instructions remained the same as before.

Both the Irish English and German NS data were collected in a formal setting. The questionnaires in both languages included a number of short questions pertaining to age, gender, native language(s) and nationality at the start of the questionnaire designed to gather general information concerning the relative homogeneity of the respondents. Both datasets were elicited over two sittings — the Irish English NS data in September 1997 and the German NS data in April 1998. The researcher was present at all times in the elicitation of both sets of NS data.

Retrospective interviews

The retrospective interviews were conducted only once — in June 1998 after all other data collection exercises had taken place. Although it would have been interesting to track informants' changing metapragmatic knowledge, this was not done in order to avoid drawing informants' attention to the pragmatic nature of the study. The roleplays and interviews were carried out after final completion of the DCT and FDCT. In order to diminish the effect of having met the roleplay situations in the production questionnaires, informants were requested to complete a short cloze-test from Häusserman et al. (1979:79 *passim*) between the completion of the DCT/FDCT and enactment of the roleplays (cf. Appendix 5). The main concentration of the following section is the roleplays conducted prior to the retrospective interviews as much of the information pertaining to the collection of the metapragmatic data was included in 4.1.1.3 in order to differentiate the type of verbal report employed from other possible types of introspection.

The roleplays, based on DCT/FDCT situations, took place between the core group of learners and a German NS. Since the interviews had to be carried out in the city/town in which the respondents were studying, the German NS were friends/acquaintances of the year abroad group whom they had asked to participate in the research project. As only a small number of items could be chosen, so as not to impose excessively on learners or NS, those situations which were nearest to the setting in which the roleplay took place, i.e., a university setting, were chosen. An overview of these situations is given in Table 6 (cf. also Appendix 3 and 4.1.1.2 for situational descriptions).

The first situation was an example designed to put participants at ease with the role-playing situation (cf. Aston 1995:64) and to clarify what was expected of them in the retrospective interview prior to recording, while the latter four items were chosen to elicit an oral example of each of the four speech acts under analysis. All five dyadic conversations were recorded in a room with only the learner and native speaker present. The researcher, although not present in an effort to reduce the observer effect, was always nearby in case of difficulties. Roleplays took approximately five minutes in total and were video-recorded in order to permit the data to be viewed by informants and so aid instant recall (cf. Leinhardt 1988:493 on the use of videotapes in research).

Table 6. Overview of roleplays employed in retrospective interviews

No.	Situation	Speech act to be elicited
Example	Beverage	Offer
1	Lift	Refusal
2	Late	Apology ^a
3	Maths	Offer
4	Notes	Request

^a As mentioned above, apologies, though originally included in the research project, are not analysed in the present project.

Situations were simulated using cards, on which were printed short situational descriptions, in which participants were addressed directly in an informal manner, i.e., using the “*du*” form (cf. 4.1.1.1, endnote 10, part (b) for an explanation). As in the DCT and FDCT, instructions for the roleplay were given in German for the learners and German NS in the light of the belief that this would enhance responses (cf. Olshtain/Cohen 1983:32). A glossary of potentially difficult terms was also included on the roleplay cards. Each situation was printed on a different coloured card, with participants requested to enact one of two parts, either A or B, both of which were printed on similar coloured cards (cf. Appendix 8). The learners took part A in all situations. Situational descriptions were adopted from the classic DCT/FDCT to ensure comparability, and the relevant speech acts were printed in bold and underlined to ensure elicitation of the relevant speech act. Unlike the situation in the study of non-native speaker refusals carried out by Houck/Gass (1996:51) where native speakers were “...instructed not to give up too easily in cases in which the non-native speaker initially refused”, no instructions were given as to the amount of negotiation expected in order to avoid a potentially unrealistic situation. Instead, respondents were directed to act as they would in a real-life situation. Where the conversation had been prefaced by an interlocutor initiation on the DCT/FDCT, the first sentence was given on the card and the relevant interactant requested to start with this utterance. This was in an effort to focus the roleplays.

Post-year abroad questionnaire

The post-year abroad questionnaire was posted to informants prior to the final data collection. They were requested to complete the questionnaire in advance of the researcher’s visit to avoid the final data collection session being unnecessarily long for the informants. A small number of informants who had not completed the questionnaire by the time of the researcher’s visit, were requested to complete it while other informants were participating in the roleplays/retrospective interviews.

Assessment questionnaire

The assessment questionnaires were also distributed in a classroom setting to NS of both Irish English and German — the former data was elicited in September 1997, the latter on two separate occasions in January 1999 and October 1999.

4.2 Informants

The basic design of the present study concentrates on three groups of informants, i.e., learners and native speakers of the learners' L1 and L2. In so doing, it follows the traditional interlanguage design proposed by Selinker in 1972 (cf. 3.4.2), and widely adopted since then (cf., e.g., Edmondson et al. 1982, 1984 on triadic datasets). The three groups in the present study are:

- Irish learners of German spending a “year abroad” (i.e., ten months) studying in Germany;
- Native speakers of German (Germany);
- Native speakers of English (Ireland)

In addition, as well as these three groups of informants, it was originally planned to include a control group in the study to control for the effect of the stay in the target speech community. However, as explained in more detail in 6.2, a low participation rate due to a number of factors, such as motivation, contact opportunities and lack of financial reward prevented such an analysis, giving the current study a pre-experimental status (cf. Larsen-Freeman/Long 1991: 19f).

Having students as participants for the present study guaranteed a large degree of homogeneity, as students, by their very nature, form a broadly homogeneous group as regards age, level of income, general level of education and personal concerns. Consequently, meaningful findings were able to be elicited despite the absence of large numbers of informants. In accordance with a recommendation by Kasper/Dahl (1991: 226), each group contained approximately thirty students.²⁴

4.2.1 Learner informants

Each year students from the Department of German in University College Dublin spend a year studying abroad in a German university/institute of technology. All students participate in the Erasmus program, except in exceptional cases where a scholarship may have been awarded.²⁵ Fifty-nine students from University College Dublin spent the academic year 1997/1998 studying in Germany. Of these, thirty-three students participated in the research.²⁶ These students studied in fourteen different German cities and towns in different parts of Germany.

The attrition rate in the present study over the study abroad period was atypical of a longitudinal study, being as low as 0%. The fact that such a large number of students — thirty-three — remained in the project from beginning to end despite the lack of financial rewards can be attributed to the fact that the researcher was a tutor in the home Department of German during the initial stages of the project, having taught a number of the year abroad students personally. Also, the second data collection was also carried out in a formal setting at a group seminar organised by the home Department of German. In addition, the fact that the researcher was in regular contact with the students, visiting them in their year abroad residencies meant that the relationship between the students and researcher was good. Students may also have welcomed this indirect link with the department over their year abroad since contact during this time was otherwise minimal.

A system of code-names was employed to protect the identity of students. The initial “A” was used to denote Arts student, the initial “C”, International Commerce student, “F” indicated female and “M” male.²⁷ Apart from these initials, students were also provided with a particular number, which was dependent on their surname. So, for example, the informant A1F was an female Arts student, as was A2F but C5M was a male Commerce student.

In the following, the year abroad group is described based on information obtained from the pre- and post-year abroad questionnaires completed. The ages of the informants prior to their year abroad ranged from 18 to 21 years, the average age being 19.3 years. 78.8% of the students were female — a figure which increases the external validity of the study since it reflects the large female contingent in language studies in the Department of German in University College Dublin and indeed in Modern Language Departments generally in Ireland, Northern Ireland and Germany, based on this researcher’s personal experience.

All of the subjects had had between seven and eight years of formal instruction in German. The first five to six years (average: 5.6 years) had been in Irish secondary schools, where the students had all followed the same centralised curriculum; the latter two years in University College Dublin. Students were judged to be advanced adult learners of German based on the extent of their exposure to German and also on their subjective evaluations of their level of German. As illustrated in Figure 1, the majority of informants rated their level of German as fair or good in the pre-questionnaire data (cf. also Table A13–1, Appendix 13).

As Table 7 shows, previous time spent in the target speech community ranged from never having been to a German-speaking country to having spent a maximum of six months in the target speech community.

During their time in the target speech community, the students were exposed to the German language in its natural context of use. However, given the difficulties of establishing social contact with native speakers of the target language, the learners of the core group did not fully exploit all potential opportunities for input

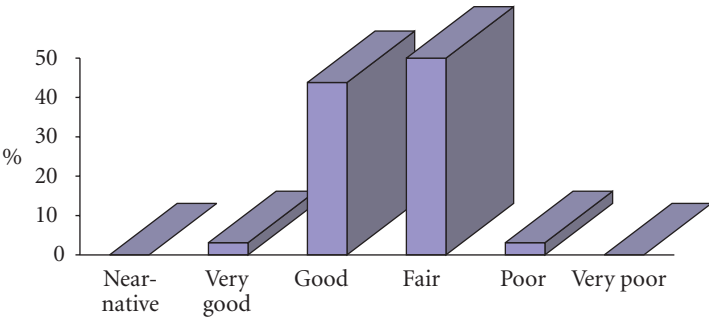


Figure 1. Self-reports of linguistic competence prior to the year abroad.

Table 7. Average previous time spent in target speech community^a

	Average
Never	24.2
< 1 month	18.2
1–3 months	30.3
3 months < <i>x</i> < 6 months	27.3

^a All values expressed in percentages.

Table 8. Average estimated time students spent speaking German/English on year abroad^a

	Average
German to German NS	29.1
German to NNS of German	21.4
English to English NS	43.4
English to NNS of English	6.1

^a All values expressed in percentages.

and output as can be seen in Table 8 which represents the present year abroad group of students' rough estimation of the amount of time they spent speaking English or German with either native speakers or other learners or non-native speakers in Germany. On average, time speaking English and German was approximately equal.

Many year abroad students attend language courses at their host university/institute of technology. Such was also the case in the present dataset. On average 86.2% of the group took part in language or translation courses during their time abroad. Of these, 75% participated in courses for an average of five hours per week for one semester only; the remaining 25% took courses over two semesters, for an average of seven hours in the first semester and five hours in the second semester.

Table 9. Composition of language courses taken by year abroad students in host university^a

	Average
Grammar	91.7
Text work	58.3
Oral skills	54.2
Written skills	45.8
Translation	29.2
Listening skills	16.7
History	8.3
Literature	8.3
Culture	4.2
Pronunciation	4.2

^a All values expressed in percentages.

Table 10. Average estimated time students spent reading German books/magazines/newspapers in free-time on year abroad^a

	Average
More than 7 hours a week	10.3
Between 3 and 7 hours a week	27.6
More than 1 and less than 3 hours a week	31
One hour or less a week	31
Never	—

^a All values expressed in percentages.

Table 11. Average estimated time students spent listening to German radio/television in free time on year abroad^a

	Average
More than 7 hours a week	62.1
Between 3 and 7 hours a week	31
More than 1 and less than 3 hours a week	—
One hour or less a week	3.4
Never	3.4

^a All values expressed in percentages.

These courses dealt with various aspects of language, as is illustrated in Table 9. The figures here relate to the students who did attend a language course in the target speech community. On average therefore, 91.7% of all students participating in a German language course had instruction in grammar, for example, while only 16.7% of language courses focused on listening skills.

A further aspect of students' input to the German language included their exposure to the media and to written literature. The extent to which they took advantage of these opportunities is displayed in Table 10 and Table 11. From this data it appears that exposure to spoken German considerably outweighed exposure to written German, although it should be noted that a problem with the former question relates to the fact that listening to music could have formed a substantial part of radio listening time.

4.2.2 Native speaker informants

Two groups of informants are to be differentiated here. Each is dealt with in turn.

German native speakers of German (German NS)

This group of speakers represents the target norm, to which learners of German are assumed to aspire. Although German realisations of requests had been recorded within the framework of the CCSARP (cf. 2.6), and could, therefore, theoretically have been used in this project, the data were not available for analysis. As a result, German NS data for requests were elicited again, along with German NS realisations of offers and refusals of offers — these not having been researched previously.

Thirty-four native speakers from the University of Hamburg in Germany formed the population for the L2 production data elicited. Although it would have been desirable to have had native speakers from different parts of Germany to reflect the different regional varieties of German to which the students were exposed, this was not feasible. Twenty-three (67.65%) of this core group of German native speaker students were female, eleven (32.35%) male. In addition, a further group of twenty-three German native speakers in the University of Bonn completed an assessment questionnaire. Here the sex constellation was similar: 62.1% females, 37.9% males. This majority of females was seen as advantageous given the female majority in the study abroad group. Given the later starting age of Germans in university and also the very loosely-structured university system, university informants are somewhat older than the Irish university students — added to this difficulty was also that the researcher only had access to certain classes of students. The production questionnaire informants ranged from 20 to 32 years old, the average age being 25.6 years. The assessment questionnaire informants were somewhat younger having an average age of 22 yrs.

As was the case with the learner informants, the German informants who completed the production questionnaires were also given a set of code-names to protect their identity. Here the letter "G" represented native speaker of German, "F" indicated female, "M" male. Apart from these initials, students were also provided with a particular number dependent on their surname. So, for example, the informant G1F was a female native speaker of German.

Irish native speakers of English (IrEng NS)

L1 data was elicited in the present study in order to identify traces of pragmatic transfer in the learner data. Comparable data were not available since native speaker realisations of the three speech acts under investigation had not been established for Irish English. For this reason, a group of Irish native speakers of English were included in the analysis.

Theoretically the core group of year abroad informants could have been requested to provide native speaker data also. However, to avoid placing excessive demands on their time and alerting them to the focus of the study, the Irish English production questionnaires were administered to two homogeneous groups of twenty-six and twenty-seven female native speakers of Irish English from St. Leo's College in Carlow. Although it would have been preferable to have included a number of males in this group, the bias — although exaggerated — did reflect the female bias in the year abroad group. In addition, a further group of nineteen Irish English native speakers (84.2% female, 15.3% male) completed an assessment questionnaire. Although an average of two years younger than the core year abroad group of year abroad students, the native speaker and learner groups were similar in terms of social background and broad educational background.

The data collected from the individual Irish informants is referred to using a system of code-names. Here "E" represents Irish English native speaker, "F" indicates female, "M" male. Informants were also provided with a number, dependent on their surname. So, for example, the informant E1F was a female native speaker of Irish English.

4.3 Investigated speech acts

The working definition of pragmatic competence adopted in the present study takes pragmalinguistic, sociopragmatic and discourse competence in the realisation of speech acts as its focus. The particular speech acts which were chosen for the present study were requests, offers and refusals of offers. In the following, an initial explanation of the choice of these particular illocutions is given. Following this, we focus on each illocution in turn and briefly outline the relative density of interlanguage research on these particular acts (an extensive analysis of the research findings is beyond the confines of this study given its acquisitional perspective). The speech acts themselves are then described from a speech act and also from a discourse perspective. Here it should be noted that although the discourse model developed by Edmondson (1981) is employed in the analysis of interactional structure, in the interest of comparison with other interlanguage studies on the speech acts concerned, it is Searle's (1976) taxonomy of speech acts rather than Edmondson's (1981) taxonomy which is employed in the discussion of speech acts.

Let us turn to the first question: Why requests, offers and refusals of offers? In order to construct an ecologically valid measure of pragmatic competence, it was necessary to ensure as far as possible that the chosen illocutions were ones which students would encounter regularly during the course of their year abroad and also have reason to perform themselves in their everyday lives abroad. It can be assumed, given the frequent occurrence of requests, offers and refusals of offers in everyday life, that these were also common illocutions in the year abroad context. Ideally, an ethnographic study would have been carried out detailing the actual use and reception of various speech acts by year abroad students. However, given the constraints of the present study, such an investigation was not possible but this is an interesting area of further research.²⁸

Secondly, the abundant literature on cross-cultural and interlanguage realisations of requests, and what literature exists on interlanguage refusals and offers, demonstrates that these illocutions reveal cross-cultural and learner-specific differences and that they, thus, represent problematic areas for learners of all cultural backgrounds, even for advanced students (cf. Barron 2002 for an overview of such studies).

Finally, these three speech acts, since they all threaten participants' face-wants — albeit to differing degrees, as will be discussed below — allow concentration on learner development in key areas of potential difficulty, such as indirectness and modification.

4.3.1 Requests

In both cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics, requests have attracted researchers' attention more than any other speech act. However, the main focus of such interlanguage studies has been and remains to be on English as a foreign or second language — studies with German as the L2 are few and include, to my knowledge, only Barron (2000b), Faerch/Kasper (1989) and House/Kasper (1981, 1987).²⁹

Requests can be described in terms of the felicity conditions outlined in Table 12. In other words, according to Searle, requests are illocutions which represent attempts by a speaker to get the hearer to do an act *x* which is beneficial for the speaker. Given their manipulative illocutionary point, requests are categorised in Searle's (1976: 11) speech act taxonomy as directives.

In addition, as far as the interactive structure of discourse is concerned, the study is concerned with requests as *Initiates* rather than requests as *Satisfies* (e.g., accepting offers). However, as detailed in 4.3.3, requests as *Contras*, of which refusals of offers are an example, are also the focus of the present study. Requests as *Initiates* are pre-event, as they communicate a speaker's desire that a future act be performed by the hearer (cf. Leech 1983: 217). In addition, the future act may be of a verbal nature (e.g., request for directions) or a non-verbal nature (e.g., request for money), and may be calculated to take place immediately (time-now) or at some

Table 12. Felicity conditions for requests

	Directives (Request)
Preparatory condition	(a) H is able to perform <i>x</i> . S believes H is able to do <i>x</i> . (b) It is not obvious that H would do <i>x</i> without being asked.
Sincerity condition	S wants H to do <i>x</i> .
Propositional content condition	S predicates a future act <i>x</i> of H.
Essential condition	Counts as an attempt by S to get H to do <i>x</i> .

(Searle 1969:66)

point in the future (time-then) (cf. Edmondson 1981:141, Edmondson/House 1981:97ff). In the present study, the focus will be on requests for non-verbal goods in the immediate future.

Given the speaker's wish to impose on the hearer's freedom of will, requests are non-H-supportive (cf. Edmondson 1981:25). In a similar vein of thought, Brown/Levinson (1987:66) describe requests as face-threatening acts (FTAs) since in requesting, the speaker imposes on the freedom of action of the hearer and thus threatens the negative face-wants of the hearer. In addition, although it is primarily the hearer who is affected, the speaker's positive face is also threatened to a certain extent by requests — if the hearer refuses to comply with the particular request, this implies that the requester may not be accepted or liked by the refuser (cf. Mey 1993:72). Conversely, however, a request may also function as a positive politeness strategy and thus build up positive face because a speaker, by issuing a request, shows that s/he believes the hearer to be a reliable person (cf. Turner 1996:4).

For successful communication to occur, however, face must be saved, conflict avoided and the particular request to be issued made socially appropriate. In the case of requests, this is accomplished via indirectness and internal and external modification. The use of indirectness serves to create the impression that the hearer has some freedom in his/her decision to comply or not — in the conventionally indirect request, "Can you give me a loan of some money?", the hearer could, for example, theoretically say "No, I can't." With regard to modifiers, these also serve to soften the request by reducing the imposition on the hearer and lessen any negative effect associated with the illocution — by using the politeness marker "please" for example, the speaker explicitly pays respect to the negative face of the hearer — recognising his/her status as an independent person.

4.3.2 Offers

Although the contexts in which an offer may occur vary, offers of assistance, hospitable offers and gift offering represent the most common types of realisations.

While both the former types form the basis of analysis in the present study, gift-offering is excluded from the analysis, as this speech act is seldom not followed by an acceptance and, thus, unsuitable for an analysis of exchanges involving offers and refusals of offers.³⁰

Research on realisations of offers is extremely limited. In the area of German as a foreign language, there exist, to my present knowledge, only studies by Barron (2000a) and, to a small extent, by Günthner (1988:31f, 1994:482). While Irish learners of German are the subject of the former study, the latter studies deal with Chinese learners.³¹

For a characterisation of the nature of offers, let us first turn to Searle (1976:11). He categorises offers as commissives since they commit a speaker to some future course of action *x* — a categorisation followed by Bach/Harnish (1979:50f). Similarly, Edmondson/House (1981:49 *passim*) also underline the speaker's role in offering by categorising offers as attitudinal illocutions and, more specifically, as a type of Willing, as they involve situations in which a speaker communicates that s/he intends to — potentially at least — perform a future act in the interest of the hearer.

Other linguists have, however, highlighted what Aijmer (1996:189) terms the “...fuzzy nature...” of offers and have argued for a different classification. Wunderlich (1977:30), for example, proposes a further class of conditional speech acts to which offers, like warnings, threats, advices, extortions, negotiations and proposals, belong. These speech acts, he explains:

...interfere with the addressee's planning of actions. The propositional content, which is a conditional, supplies the addressee with a certain cognitive premise that he can use in his practical inferences. (Wunderlich 1977:32)

In other words, the execution of an offer, like the other speech acts mentioned here, is always conditional on the hearer indicating in some way that s/he wishes the speaker to carry out the deed in question. Offers are, thus, always followed by a reaction. Despite not always being realised using a conditional, Wunderlich (1977:43) argues that offers have the standard form: “If you want it, I shall do *a*” (original emphasis). For example, the offer, “Do you want a sandwich?”, can be said to have the standard form, “If you want a sandwich, I'll make you one.” In addition, Leech (1983:219) also uses the feature conditional/unconditional as one of a number of criteria to describe a variety of speech acts. According to his analysis, offers, like requests, are conditional speech acts, as “... *s* intends that the event will not take place unless *h* indicates agreement or compliance ...” (original emphasis).

Hancher (1979:6) goes further than either Leech or Wunderlich in stressing the importance of the involvement of the hearer as well as the speaker in realisations of offers. He criticises Searle's taxonomy for neglecting this issue and argues that offers should not be classified as commissives because they not only require the speaker to

honour his/her commitment vis-à-vis the hearer (Searle's commissives), but also involve the speaker attempting to persuade the hearer to accept the offer in question whether in a more or less obvious manner — in other words, in offering, the speaker attempts to get the hearer to declare him/herself able and willing to engage in the proposed action (Searle's directives). As such, they represent "... hybrid speech acts that combine directive with commissive illocutionary force" (Hancher 1979:6). As both illocutions are believed to carry equal force, Hancher proposes adding a further category, "Commissive Directives", to Searle's taxonomy.

Not all researchers, however, agree with Hancher's classification. Wierzbicka (1987:192), for example, is of the opinion that while offers may be of a directive nature, they are not necessarily so. She states: "It is true that *offering* is often combined with attempts to influence the addressee's behaviour, but it doesn't have to be" (original emphasis). She gives the example of an offer to bring someone books from the library as an offer predominantly commissive in nature.

The linguistic form of realisations of offers reflects their colourful nature. Schneider (forthcoming), building on Schneider (1980), identifies three main types of strategies for realising hospitable offers. While preference questions, such as "Would you like some scotch?," point to the conditional nature of offers, execution questions, such as "Can I get you a drink?," stem from their commissive nature. Finally, offers of an imperative form, such as "Have a drink," reflect the directive character of offers. A further indicator of the directive nature of offers can be found in findings by Schneider (2000) regarding the function of diminutives in requests, suggestions and offers — namely to persuade, i.e., to direct, the hearer. As Schneider (2000:299) states: "... the speaker employs DIMs [diminutives] in a persuasive strategy to negotiate a positive outcome, i.e., acceptance in the case of offers and suggestions, and compliance in the case of requests" (cf. also Schneider forthcoming).

Given the multifaceted nature of offers, two possible sets of felicity conditions may be presented for offers, as shown in Table 13, the one underlining their commissive nature, the other combining the felicity conditions for commissives and directives outlined by Searle (1969:66f).

Regarding their place in the interactional structure of conversation, the offers in the present study, or Willings in Edmondson/House's (1981:136ff) terms, are offers which realise Initiate slots.³² As such, they are referred to as "Willings Initiating exchanges".

Turning to the face-threatening features of offers, it is clear that offers, given their part-directive nature, are similar to requests, in that they threaten the hearer's negative face. They do so by the speaker exerting pressure on the hearer to react to, and in some cases to accept, the offer. The speaker's offer, although beneficial to the hearer, impinges on the hearer's privacy and lessens his/her freedom. At the same time, the speaker's positive face is threatened because s/he is committing him/herself to a future action, which may not be accepted by the hearer. If it is not accepted,

Table 13. Felicity conditions for offers as commissives and commissive-directives

	Commissives (Offer)	Commissive-Directives (Offer)
Preparatory condition	(a) S is able to perform x. (b) H wants S to perform x.	(a) S is able to perform x. (b) H wants S to perform x.
Sincerity condition	S intends to do x.	(a) S intends to do x. (b) S wants H to do x.
Propositional content condition	S predicates a future act x of S.	S predicates a future act x of S.
Essential condition	Counts as the undertaking by S of an obligation to do x, should H want S to do so.	Counts as: (a) an undertaking by S of an obligation to do x, should H want S to. (b) an attempt by S to get H to do x.

the offerer’s positive face is damaged — however, the degree of face-threat in this case is not as great as in the case of requests since, as Wierzbicka (1987:96) points out, the

...(assumed) conditional nature of the first speaker’s wish makes it possible for the second speaker to respond negatively without hurting the other person’s feelings.

Unlike requests, the speaker’s negative face is also threatened in offering. This potential threat is associated with the commissive nature of offers — and in particular with the possibility that the speaker will have to carry out the relevant deed, and thus restrict his/her freedom of action, should the hearer accept the particular offer in question. On the other hand, by offering, the speaker builds up the hearer’s positive face by indicating that s/he is positively disposed to the hearer. Similar to requests, these threats to the speaker’s and hearer’s particular face-wants may lead the speaker to mitigate the force of the illocution by realising it in an indirect manner (cf. Searle 1975:80). Indeed, as Searle (1975:80), speaking on indirection, suggests “...the richest mine for examples other than directives is provided by commissives...” (cf. also Edmondson 1981: 30 and Kasper 1981: 141). Mitigation is also a common feature, functioning to lessen any face-threat.

Ritual vs. substantive reoffers

There are a number of offer types which I briefly distinguish here — a more detailed discussion follows in the context of ritual and substantive refusals in 4.3.3. I differentiate terminologically between initiative offers and reoffers within offer

sequences. Schneider (2000:295) defines initiative offers as "...the first move in each offer sequence", where move is defined from a discourse analytical perspective. Reoffers (Schneider's "offer renewals"), on the other hand, can be described as further attempts on the part of the speaker to reiterate a particular initiative offer within one offer sequence. Reoffers are more common in some cultures than in others. Indeed, because of this it is necessary to distinguish between two types of reoffers — ritual and substantive reoffers. The difference between these lies in the interaction between the reoffer and the preceding initiative offer. In some cultures, illocutionary intent is namely communicated in the initiative offer, while the sincerity condition is not fulfilled until a ritual reoffer follows. In other words, in such cases it is not until the ritual reoffer that the felicity conditions for offers have been fulfilled and the offer competently realised. From the hearer's point of view, therefore, the offer is not sincere until it has been reiterated — consequently, a ritual refusal commonly follows an initiative offer in such cultures. This discourse convention to realise reoffers has also been termed pressing (cf. Schneider 2000:295). Given their frequent occurrence, ritual reoffers commonly take a conventionalised form when employed in a particular culture.

4.3.3 Refusals of offers

Refusals are found as *Contras* in four types of exchanges, namely those involving invitations-refusals, requests-refusals, offers-refusals and suggestions-refusals. The type of *Initiate* influences the realisation of the form and content of the refusal in question (cf. Beebe et al. 1990:56). The present investigation concentrates exclusively on refusals of offers.³³

In general, studies which investigate refusals of offers are few in number and most do not deal exclusively with refusals of offers. Those interlanguage studies that do focus on refusals of offers to some degree concentrate predominantly on English as a foreign or second language. Realisations of refusals in German as a foreign/second language have, however, to my knowledge, not yet been investigated, with the exception of Barron (2000a).³⁴

Refusals of offers are, in essence, "attempts ... by the speaker to get the hearer to do something" (Searle 1976:11) or, more accurately in this case, not to do something. In other words, we are dealing with requests by the speaker for the hearer not to do a future act *x* which the hearer has offered to do. As such, refusals of offers can be categorised according to Searle's typology as directive speech acts. The basic set of conditions necessary for the felicitous performance of the speech act of refusal of offer are as set out in Table 14.

Edmondson/House (1981:108) describe refusals of offers as an attitudinal illocution (Edmondson/House 1981:49 *passim*) and, within their model of discourse, as requests for non-verbal goods appearing as *Contras*. Refusals, since they occupy

Table 14. Felicity conditions for refusals of offers

	Directives (Refusal of Offer)
Preparatory condition	(a) H is able to (not) perform <i>x</i> . S believes H is able (not) to perform <i>x</i> . (b) It is not obvious that H would (not) do <i>x</i> without being asked.
Sincerity condition	S wants H (not) to do <i>x</i> .
Propositional content condition	S predicates a future act <i>x</i> of H.
Essential condition	Counts as an attempt by S to get H (not) to do <i>x</i> .

(cf. Searle 1969:66f)

a Contra slot in the interactional structure of a conversation, serve as an attempt to persuade the interlocutor to withdraw his/her Initiate move, realised in this case by an offer (“Willings as an Initiating exchange” in Edmondson/House’s 1981 terms). They, thus, increase the complexity of exchanges and, as noted in 3.2.3, are more difficult for learners to realise than Initiate moves, such as requests or offers.

In conversation analysis, a refusal of offer is classified as a dispreferred second pair part of an adjacency pair, the first part of which is an offer. A comparison of realisations of refusals of offers with realisations of the relevant preferred second pair part, namely acceptances of offers, highlights the higher structural complexity of refusals of offers and, thus, makes their dispreferred nature evident (cf. Levinson 1983:307f).

Brown/Levinson (1987:65) classify refusals of offers as face-threatening acts (FTAs), which intrinsically threaten the hearer’s negative face-wants. As such, they threaten the hearer’s “... need to be independent, to have freedom of action, and not to be imposed on by others” (Yule 1996:61). By requesting the hearer to refrain from doing a future act, the speaker is, essentially, impinging on the hearer’s freedom to do as s/he wishes. Refusals of offers are, however, not as face-threatening in this regard as refusals of requests since offers, in contrast to requests, are conditional on the hearer declaring him/herself willing and able to engage in the proposed act. In addition, refusals of offers, by expressing a desire for the offerer not to engage in a particular action, potentially threaten the hearer’s positive face — more so than is the case with refusals of requests, given the greater speaker-orientation of offers. Similar to requests and offers, the face-threatening nature of refusals of offers is accounted for in a high degree of indirectness and modification (cf. Beebe et al. 1990:56, Houck/Gass 1996:48f, Möhl 1996:23).

Ritual vs. substantive refusals

Two types of refusals of offers are to be differentiated, namely initial refusals and subsequent refusals. Initial refusals realise a first *Contra* in an offer-refusal of offer exchange whereas subsequent refusals realise a third or subsequent *Contra*. Initial refusals can be broken down into two types — (a) ritual refusals, defined as “...polite act[s] to indicate the speaker’s consideration of the hearer” (Chen et al. 1995:152) and (b) substantive refusals (cf. Chen et al. 1995:152), also termed genuine refusals (cf. Schneider 2000:296). Ritual refusals are always followed by either a subsequent refusal or indeed an acceptance in a later move. Subsequent refusals usually take the form of a substantive refusal — however, depending on the particular culture in question, they may also take the form of a further ritual refusal, which is at a later stage followed by an acceptance or a subsequent refusal realised by a substantive refusal. On the other hand, some speech communities do not have ritual refusals at all — having only substantive refusals.

The contrast between ritual and substantive refusals is to be found in Searle’s sincerity condition for refusals, i.e., “S wants H not to do *x*”. In contrast to genuine/substantive refusals, this condition is not satisfied in ritual refusals since the speaker merely pretends to refuse the offer in question in the interest of the norms of politeness. In reality, however, the speaker expects a second offer or reoffer, which s/he can then either accept or refuse, as s/he wishes. In other words, the sincerity condition is not fulfilled in the ritual refusal — instead a second, or indeed third, refusal is required to fully perform the illocutionary act. The manner in which ritual refusals function can be best understood with reference to Leech’s (1983) politeness maxims. As Schneider (2000:294f) explains, the hearer-oriented nature of offers means that the benefit to the recipient of an offer has been maximised (Tact maxim) and the cost to the offerer also maximised (Generosity maxim). However, if the recipient of the offer is to observe the principles of politeness, s/he will wish to simultaneously minimise any cost to offerer (Tact Maxim) and also minimise benefit to self (Generosity Maxim). The result is a ritual refusal. The offerer, on the other hand, not wishing to appear mean or ungenerous, will reoffer, realising that his/her hearer may have been merely acting out of politeness. S/he will, thus, once again, attempt to maximise benefit to the hearer (Tact Maxim) and maximise cost to self (Generosity Maxim) (cf. also Leech 1983:111f). Following this step, the recipient of the offer, may either accept, refuse, or, if necessary — depending on the cultural setting — realise a further ritual refusal before eventually accepting or refusing.

While not present in all cultures, ritual reoffers and ritual refusals play an important role in what constitutes polite behaviour in many speech communities. Chen et al. (1995:151ff) report, for example, that ritual refusals in Chinese represent a standard way of reacting to any given offer (cf. also Günthner 1988:31f, 1994:482, Liao 1994:143ff and Zhu et al. 1999), and Rubin (1983:14) explains that

up to two ritual refusals are expected in relation to offers of food in the Arab world. Furthermore, Holmes (1992: 306f) explains that only on the third offer is it suitable to accept food in some parts of India and Taiwan and, therefore, also that only the third refusal counts as a substantive refusal. Finally, Brown/Levinson (1987:233) report of lengthy offer sequences in Tenejapa, a North American Indian ethnic group concentrated in the central highlands of the State of Chiapas in Mexico.

4.4 Evaluating the data

Particulars pertaining to the present analysis are the subject of this section. While Part 4.4.1 concerns the specific aspects of pragmatic and discourse competence addressed in the present study, procedures relating to the method of analysis and the presentation of data are discussed in Part 4.4.2.

4.4.1 Focus of analysis

The investigation at hand does not aim at a comprehensive description of how the present Irish learners of German, Irish English NS or German NS request, offer or refuse offers. Instead, it focuses on learners' developing pragmatic competence. Consequently, rather than structuring the analysis according to speech acts, i.e., dealing first with requests, then with offers and finally with refusals of offers, an alternative approach was chosen, namely to investigate learners' competence in three particularly insightful areas of pragmatic competence common to most, if not all, of the chosen speech acts. The first of these areas is learners' competence in structuring discourse. Here the concentration is exclusively on offer-refusal exchanges. The second area concerns learners' use of various types of pragmatic routines in the realisation of all three of the chosen speech acts. Finally, learners' use of mitigation over all three speech acts is investigated. In this latter section, the focus is on the use of syntactic downgraders and lexical and phrasal downgraders. Research into the nature of requests, offers and refusals of offers as discussed in 4.3.1–4.3.3 is, of course, also drawn on in the analysis.

In the following, these particular aspects of pragmatic and discourse competence are outlined and some detail is given regarding the reasons behind their selection, including the particular difficulties they pose for learners and why potential developments towards the L2 norm in these areas may be welcomed. Accompanying the overview of each of these aspects is a brief explanation of the coding procedure employed.

4.4.1.1 *Discourse structure*

Levinson (1983:289) points out that refusals of offers follow offers in a sequence. However, the sequences making up a particular offer-acceptance or offer-refusal exchange are not always uniform or simple, and indeed the structure of a particular offer-refusal exchange may differ across culture, causing difficulties for the language learner. In the following, the potential which such differences in exchange structure hold for misunderstanding are highlighted. However, before these are addressed, it is necessary to outline a number of possible offer-acceptance and offer-refusal exchange structures in a descriptive manner and address coding issues, particularly as this aspect of offers has not been investigated in depth in the literature to date.

Issues of coding

Learner and NS offer-refusal exchange data are analysed in this study using the framework for discourse analysis presented in Edmondson (1981) and Edmondson/House (1981) and outlined in 2.5.2. Let us start with a simple exchange:

a. *Simple exchange*

The simplest type of offer exchange possible is that in which the outcome is positive and no complex negotiations are involved, as in the following example taken from Mike Leigh's play, "Abigail's Party":

- (3) Leigh (1983:22)
- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|------------|
| <i>Laurence:</i> | Drink? | (INITIATE) |
| <i>Tony:</i> | Yes, please. | (SATISFY) |
| Exchange structure: Initiate–Satisfy | | |

Here the Initiate is an initiative offer, and the Satisfy an acceptance of this offer. The Satisfy brings the exchange to a close with a positive outcome. Slightly more complex is the following case taken from the present German NS corpus where the outcome of the exchange is negative:

- (4) Bag, G28F:
- | | | |
|--------------|--|------------|
| <i>Du:</i> | <i>Soll ich Dir einen Koffer abnehmen</i> | (INITIATE) |
| <i>Frau:</i> | <i>Ach danke, aber das geht schon. Die sind zwar groß aber nicht schwer.</i> | |
| | <i>Trotzdem, vielen Dank</i> | (CONTRA) |
| <i>Du:</i> | <i>Keine Ursache.</i> | (SATISFY) |
- (Bag, G28F (translation):
- | | | |
|--------------|--|------------|
| <i>You:</i> | Shall I take one of your cases for you | (INITIATE) |
| <i>Girl:</i> | Oh thanks, but I'm all right. They're big all right but they're not heavy. | |
| | Thanks all the same | (CONTRA) |
| <i>You:</i> | No problem. | (SATISFY)) |
- Exchange structure: Initiate–Contra–Satisfy

In this example, a Contra follows the Initiate, and a Satisfy the Contra. The Satisfy brings the outcome to a negative outcome by functioning as an "... 'accepting' move ..." (Edmondson 1981:99, original emphasis), with respect to the immediately preceding valid interactional move, a refusal in this case. In other words, it is the initial refusal of offer rather than the initiative offer which is accepted in this case.

b. *Complex exchange*

Exchanges involving offers are, however, not always as simple as those presented above, and complex negotiation is a common feature, i.e., where an Initiate is followed by a number of Contras. Such Contras occur when a refusal is not accepted. The following example from the present dataset serves as an illustration:

(5) Maths, E20F:

You: I can go back over some of the stuff with you if you like (INITIATE)

Friend: No, it's ok, I can do it myself if I just settle down and concentrate (CONTRA 1)

You: Yeah but it's easier revise with two. We can compare answers (CONTRA 2)

Friend: thanks, but I find it easier to revise alone (CONTRA 3)

You: Ok... (SATISFY)

Exchange structure: Initiate- n (Contra)-Satisfy, $n=3$

Here the initiative offer of assistance is refused, i.e., the Initiate is Contraed. However, this initial refusal is not accepted, instead a reoffer taking the ad hoc form, "Yeah but it's easier with two. We can compare answers", Contras it (Contra 2), and in this way the initiative offer is effectively reiterated. Despite two opportunities to accept the offer, however, the friend again refuses, and so we have a further Contra (Contra 3). Finally, after two attempts to persuade the friend in question to accept the offer of assistance, the offer is withdrawn in the final Satisfying move and the exchange comes to a close with a negative outcome.

Another possibility of a complex offer-refusal exchange is the following dialogue:

(6) Accident, A1F:

Pfarrer: Kann ich dich ins Krankenhaus fahren? (INITIATE)

Du: Nein danke. Ich wohne in der Nähe von hier. Ich fühle mich in Ordnung. (CONTRA 1)

Pfarrer: Kann ich dich nach Hause fahren? (CONTRA 2)

Du: Nein danke. Es ist nur zwei Minuten zur Fuß. Ich werde mein Rad zu Haus lassen. Mein Vater kann mich in die Uni bringen. (CONTRA 3)

(Accident, A1F (translation):

- Priest:* Can I drive you to the hospital? (INITIATE)
You: No thanks. I live nearby. I feel fine. (CONTRA 1)
Priest: Can I drive you home? (CONTRA 2)
You: No thanks. It's only a two minute walk. I'll leave my bicycle at home.
 My dad can bring me to college. (CONTRA 3))

Exchange structure: Initiate- n (Contra)-Satisfy, $n = 3$

In this dialogue, taken from the present learner dataset, rather than the same offer content being put forward a number of times as in example (5), alternative realisations of the initiative offer are brought forward — the offer of assistance first takes the form of an offer to bring the injured person to hospital, and then of an offer to bring the person home. This exchange also has the structure Initiate- n (Contra)-Satisfy, where n is in this case three. The Satisfy, although not explicitly present, is implied.

The same complex exchange structure is also relevant in cases of ritual refusals — common in a number of cultures (cf. 4.3.3). Here two examples are presented to illustrate the high degree of complexity present — the first is taken again from the play, “Abigail’s Party”, the second from the present Irish English NS dataset:

(7) Leigh (1983:35)

- Beverly:* Now then, Sue, let's see ... would you like a little cigarette? (INITIATE)
Susan: Oh. No, thank you. (CONTRA 1)
Beverly: Are you sure? (CONTRA 2)
Susan: Yes. Thank you. (CONTRA 3)
Beverly: Perhaps you'll have one a little bit later on... (SATISFY)

Exchange structure: Initiate- n (Contra)-Satisfy, $n = 3$

(8) Bag, E11F:

- ... *You:* I noticed you have two big bags, I was wondering do you need a hand? (INITIATE)
Girl: No thanks, I can manage (CONTRA 1)
You: Are you sure? (CONTRA 2)
Girl: Yeah. Thanks anyway (CONTRA 3)
You: Alright (SATISFY)

Exchange structure: Initiate- n (Contra)-Satisfy, $n = 3$

In both (7) and (8), the initiative offer is followed by an initial refusal (i.e., the Initiate is Contraed). However, in neither case does the offerer withdraw the offer, instead, s/he reaffirms it in a conventional manner (“Are you sure?”) (Contras the Contra), whereupon the refuser again produces a Contra, and the offerer then finally withdraws the initiative offer of help by Satisfying the preceding Contra and both exchanges come to a close with a negative outcome. The ritual nature of the second Contra in these dialogues is communicated in both cases via the pragmatic routine, “Are you sure?” (cf. 5.2.1).

In the analysis in 5.1, all exchanges are coded as simple or complex. Exchanges including Counters but not Contras are not included as complex exchanges in order to ensure that all exchanges coded as complex involved a reiteration of the initiative offer (cf. 2.5.2).

Discourse structure — Learner difficulties

Communication between speech communities which employ ritual refusals and those which do not, can, logically, be expected to involve some degree of misunderstanding since a complex offer-refusal exchange structure of the form Initiate- n (Contra)-Satisfy, where $n > 1$, would be used in a community with ritual refusals where a simple exchange structure, Initiate-Contra-Satisfy, would be employed in other communities. As a result, participants used to associating offers involving a relatively high level of face-threat with a complex exchange structure may be made to feel uneasy, if, what would be a simple exchange for them, takes a more complex form in a different speech community. Indeed, Günthner (1994:482), writing on the tendency of Chinese native speakers to use more complex offer-refusal exchanges than German native speakers, highlights such potential for misunderstanding. She writes:

German speakers feel very uneasy or even annoyed when their host keeps on insisting after they had seriously refused something. We infer the other person does not respect our wish and is too pushy.

On the other hand, Günthner explains that the lack of such rituality in offering and refusing in German leads Chinese speakers to become frustrated in offer-refusal exchanges. In this regard, she quotes a Chinese informant who had lived in Germany for three years:

If I accept the first time, this means — at least for us Chinese — that I am very greedy. But in Germany if I don't accept right away, the Germans often won't keep on offering — so I remain hungry and thirsty. (Günthner 1994:482)

In such instances, the interactant of the culture in which ritual refusals are common expects to have to negotiate somewhat before an offer can be accepted or refused since an initiative offer cannot be viewed as sincere (cf. 4.3.2). The absence of such negotiation is associated with a lack of politeness, and may, indeed, lead to pragmatic failure for the language learner (cf. also Liao 1994:147f).

In the following, a number of sources (unfortunately none of them taking the form of detailed linguistic research on any variety of English) suggest that ritual reoffers are a feature of Irish English. The following passage from Hayes' (1997:52) Irish conversation guide, for example, draws attention to the frequency of ritual refusals in the Irish culture. Hayes writes:

If tempted with anything, always refuse it first time in the knowledge that a second overture will come (if the host really wishes you to have it). If another offer does not come, you must assume that the host was merely being polite, rather than generous. Decline all offers first time ... A good host will wave these protests aside ...

In other words, according to Hayes, an initiative offer in an Irish context lacks sincerity, i.e., the offer itself is often not completed in one turn. As a result, the interlocutor is commonly expected to refuse an offer at first irrespective of whether s/he wishes to refuse or not. If a second offer is not extended, the offer was not sincere. With a reoffer, the sincerity condition is fulfilled and the interlocutor is, thus, free to accept, if s/he wishes to do so.

Further examples are found in “Father Ted”, a renowned television comedy series set in Ireland. This series exploits and, to a certain extent, ridicules the supposed ritual nature of offer exchanges in Irish English by exaggerating its use until the number of reoffers stretches to the ridiculous. The following example is one of several instances when this discourse feature appears in the script.³⁵ In this particular instance, Father Jack, one of three priests living in the parish house together, has just died, and Mrs. Doyle (MD), their housekeeper, is serving sandwiches to the mourners, one of whom is the unfortunate Father Cleary (FC):

(9) Father Ted (1996a)

- MD: Will you have a sandwich, Father Cleary?
 FC: eh, no thanks, Mrs. Doyle, I'm fine.
 MD: Have a try. They're diagonal.
 FC: Ah, so, I see, but eh (pause) eh, no, thanks anyway.
 MD: Ah, go on, sure they're only small.
 FC: No, no, I'm grand.
 MD: Are you sure you won't have one?
 FC: eh, no thanks, Mrs. Doyle, I, I ate before I came out.
 MD: Would you like one for later? I could put it in a bag?
 FC: Ah no, no, don't bother, no, no.
 MD: Here's a little bag [shows a small bag] you can bring one home in.
 FC: No, no, no.
 MD: And here's a bigger bag you can put the little bag into.
 FC: No.
 MD: And you can eat it later, or you can eat it now, if you want, whatever suits you.
 FC: No, no.
 MD: Ah, you'll have one now.
 FC: Ah sure, I might as well.

The exchange structure here is obviously complex. It takes the form Initiate–*n*(Contra)–Satisfy, where *n* is sixteen. In other words, there are sixteen Contras

before the offer is eventually accepted and the exchange terminated with a positive outcome. Similar to the previous example, Mrs. Doyle presumes here that the initial refusal — and indeed all subsequent refusals — are ritual and, thus, not to be taken at face value. The ritual nature of the reoffers is underlined by the use of pragmatic routines, such as “Are you sure...?” and “Go on”. Indeed, the mere existence of such pragmatic routines points to the existence of a recurrent need to deal with a particular situation — in this case reoffering — in an efficient manner.

Should the present investigation show ritual refusals to be a feature of Irish English and not of German, differences on the level of the offer-refusal exchange would represent a possible source of cultural disparity for Irish learners of German exposed to the German culture. The present learners might, consequently, be expected to engage in pragmatic transfer from their L1 and, thus, be open to potential pragmatic failure.

4.4.1.2 *Pragmatic routines*

Kasper/Schmidt (1996: 164), in their article on the development of L2 pragmatic competence, summarise previous research findings by noting that pragmatic routines:

...constitute a substantial part of adult NS pragmatic competence, and learners need to acquire a sizable repertoire of routines in order to cope efficiently with recurrent and expanding social situations and discourse requirements ...

In the light of the importance of pragmatic routines as a component of pragmatic competence, it is little wonder that Kasper/Schmidt (1996: 164) go on to state, “...how pragmatic routines are acquired has to be addressed as a research issue in its own right”. The acquisition of pragmatic routines by the present advanced learners over time in the target speech community is addressed in the present analysis. Before such an investigation can, however, be conducted, we must first address what pragmatic routines actually are, why their acquisition is a necessary part of pragmatic competence and also why their acquisition may pose difficulties for learners.

Pragmatic routines — What/why?

Pragmatic routines can be defined as:

...highly conventionalised prepatterned expressions whose occurrence is tied to more or less standardized communication situations. (Coulmas 1981: 2f)³⁶

The role they play in performing particular pragmatic or discourse functions is motivated by the recurrence of specific face-threatening social situations in a particular linguistic community and the consequent need for an efficient way with

which these can be dealt while undergoing a minimum of risk (cf. Laver 1981:292). In other words, as reflected in the term, situation-bound utterances (SBU), which Kecskés (1999:299) uses to refer to pragmatic routines, their use is "...highly predetermined by the situation".

Pragmatic routines take one of two main linguistic forms, both of which will be discussed in this study. These are:

- Memorised, prepatterned chunks, e.g., "thank you", "please", "how are you?", "no problem", "are you sure?"
- Patterns: i.e., partially unanalysed stretches with one or more open slots (cf. Ellis 1985:167), e.g., "I wonder could you x?", "I would appreciate if...", "can I...?", "NP is/looks (really) ADJ" (e.g., "Your hair looks nice") (Wolfson/Manes 1980:402f).

Despite being universal phenomena, they demonstrate cultural distinctiveness as a result of their situational dependency. As Ferguson (1976:137) notes:

All human speech communities have such formulas, although their character and the incidence of their use may vary enormously from one society to another.

In other words, pragmatic routines are often "... sprach-, kultur- und gesellschaftsspezifisch ..." (...language, culture and society specific...) (Coulmas 1985:53) and therefore problematic for the learner, as is outlined below.

Pragmatic routines offer manifold benefits to native speakers and learners alike in the facilitation of communication, and the consequences of a lack of competence in such routines are accordingly many. Let us turn firstly to the benefits they offer.

Thanks to their rigid form which enables a variety of complex, recurring, face-threatening situations, such as requests or refusals, to be handled in an orderly manner, pragmatic routines bring "...great utility and face-cost benefit...", (Brown/Levinson 1987:235) from which stems a feeling of "...Sicherheit im Verhalten" (... certainty in behaviour) (Lüger 1993:8). Wray (1999:216), in a survey of previous research on formulaic speech, traces this sense of security to ease of decoding, and the resultant likelihood that the speaker's interactional purpose will succeed.

Routines also facilitate learners' understanding of a foreign culture with all its peculiarities given their cultural-specificity. In addition, since they serve to support group identity among native speakers, mastery of pragmatic routines facilitates learners' "...Einstieg in die Sprachgemeinschaft..." (... entry into the linguistic community...) (Coulmas 1985:55) by signalling an understanding of and adaptation to the practices of the particular society in question. Indeed, Hayes (1997:68) in the closing page of his Irish conversation guide, a handbook of language use in Ireland which includes numerous Irish routines, notes:

You are now a valuable member of Irish society. Your talents will be admired, your company sought, and all you meet will hunger for the honey-coated words that flow from your lips. Now, sally forth, confident, upright: Open your mouth and let the world hear.

A further advantage of pragmatic routines which is of particular importance for learners, is the "... 'natural' and proficient flavor" (Coulmas 1981:9, original emphasis) which they lend to speech — a flavour which may be real, but indeed also feigned (cf. Davies 1987:76, House 1996b:226). Nevertheless, due to this fluent flavour, routines may also indirectly serve as input generators, enabling learners, particularly less advanced learners, to communicate at a higher level of proficiency than they may otherwise be able. The resulting higher motivation in turn supports language learning (cf. Röver 1996:50). The fluent flavour of routines stems not only from the native speaker-like flavour of the routines themselves, but also from the "Entlastungsfunktion" (relief function) (Coulmas 1985:64 *passim*) which such routines fulfil in speech for both native speakers and learners alike. Pragmatic routines are namely stored in memory as chunked wholes and can be thus retrieved quickly and easily, demanding little in terms of attention. They, therefore, allow speakers time for conversational planning, the production of creative utterances, and also, of particular importance to learners, time to monitor utterances (cf. Coulmas 1981:9 and Edmondson 1989:293). Indeed, so significant is this added planning time for learners, in particular, that such routines are often described as "islands of reliability" (Dechert 1983:183f), due to their function as a "safe base" for learners in dealing with recurrent situations. As Dechert (1984:223) states: "A person setting out to speak needs points of fixation, anchoring grounds to start from and return to!" (original emphasis).

Such are the primary advantages of pragmatic routines, however, a lack of competence in this area also carries with it many negative consequences. Firstly, it has been suggested by Edmondson/House (1991:284f) that pragmatic routines are so important in communication that the waffle phenomenon recorded particularly in learners' written speech act realisations (cf. 3.2.3) may be related to an underlying lack of, or distrust of, routinised, standardised expressions and their uses. Given a weak competence in conventionalised routines, they argue that learners may prefer to create new utterances using the rules they know and trust rather than to employ pragmatic routines. Also Warga (2002a:223) finds that a lack of competence in pragmatic routines leads her learners to turn to individual, necessarily longer, formulations.³⁷ The danger here is the potential for pragmatic failure due to possible hearer impatience when confronted with lengthy explanations (cf. Blum-Kulka/Olshtain 1986:175).

Apart from the waffle phenomenon, other, perhaps more central sources of both pragmlinguistic and sociopragmatic failure in relation to pragmatic routines, also exist. Given the deep-rooted relationship between certain recurring situations

and particular pragmatic routines, misunderstanding, inappropriate use or omission of a pragmatic routine, can lead to pragmatic failure.³⁸ As Stein (1994: 171) states:

... in vielen Situationen ist die Beherrschung der Routineformeln geradezu zwingend, will man nicht gegen die Konventionen verstoßen und — in der interkulturellen Kommunikation — Mißverständnisse riskieren.

(...mastery of routine formulae is absolutely compulsory in many situations, if one doesn't want to violate conventions and — in intercultural communication — risk misunderstandings.)

An appropriate use of pragmatic routines, thus, yields many valuable rewards for learners and prevents particular instances of miscommunication. It is therefore a goal for which learners should strive. House (1996b: 226) estimates the number of routines available to an educated native English speaker to be in the thousands. As learner competence increases, so therefore also should his/her repertoire of pragmatic routines.

Pragmatic routines — Learner difficulties

Learners — also advanced learners — have been found to experience difficulties in their attempts at mastery of pragmatic routines. A study by Scarcella (1979b: 83f), for example, found that advanced adult Spanish learners of English experienced difficulty in realising various pragmatic routines due to transfer, overgeneralisation and acoustic approximation. Similar findings were presented by Eisenstein/Bodman (1986: 176) who established that advanced learners of English had difficulties using L2 thanking routines (cf. also Edmondson 1986: 61f). House (1995: 95), summarising some of her previous research findings, notes in this regard, that:

... pragmatische Fehler [entstehen] auch bei sehr fortgeschrittenen Lernern häufig durch pragmatisch unangemessene Verwendung sprachlicher Routinen ..., welche sich mit massivem pragmatischen Transfer (aufgrund deutlicher Unterschiede in Verfügbarkeit, Distribution und Funktion sprachlicher Routinen zwischen L1 und L2) erklären lassen.

(...pragmatic errors [are] also often [found] among very advanced learners due to use of pragmatically inappropriate linguistic routines ... which can be explained by massive pragmatic transfer (due to obvious differences in the availability, distribution and function of linguistic routines in the L1 and L2).)

In other words, she identifies transfer as the major force behind advanced learners' inappropriate use of pragmatic routines (cf. also House 1993a).

The present investigation builds on such research findings, and focuses on incidences of negative transfer. To this end, the analysis is structured around

Davies' (1987:79ff) categories of routines of varying levels of equivalence across cultures (cf. 5.2).

4.4.1.3 *Internal modification*

After a brief description of internal modification, the difficulties experienced by learners in this regard are briefly sketched. Following this, the procedure adopted in the present study for analysing modification is explained. Attention then turns to the syntactic and lexical and phrasal downgrading employed in the present study. Finally, those individual modifiers of particular importance in the present investigation are discussed in more detail from a learner perspective.

Internal modification — What/why?

Speaking in a polite manner involves being aware of the effect which the illocutionary force of a particular speech act will have on one's addressee, and aggravating or mitigating this force as required (cf. Fraser 1980:342). It is internal modification which concerns us here, the use of which concerns the employment of so-called "*modality markers*" (cf. House/Kasper 1981:166, original emphasis). There are two types of such markers, namely upgraders and downgraders. While upgraders intensify the impact of a particular utterance on the addressee, downgraders, of which there are also two types — syntactic downgraders (SDn) and lexical and phrasal downgraders (L&PD) — serve to mitigate the respective illocutionary force. Whether these modality markers serve to nurture or aggravate social relations depends on the particular speech act with which they are employed. While downgraders serve to reduce any negative effects of speech acts, such as requests, they dilute the positive effects of other speech acts as, for example, apologies.

Internal modification — Learner difficulties

The historical relatedness of German and English means that it is not surprising that the range of downgraders available in both languages is rather similar (cf. House/Kasper 1987:1263). Hence, it is their relative distribution across language and interlanguage which is of primary interest in the present analysis. Learners have been found to show a general tendency to under-use modality markers. Reasons identified relate to overgeneralisation due to a strategy of least effort and a playing-it-safe strategy (cf. 3.1.2 for further details).

Issues of coding

The coding scheme employed in the present study for requests is that which was developed for the CCSARP by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989b:275ff), itself based on an

earlier coding system by Edmondson (1981) (cf. 2.6.2). It allows a request to be analysed according to the degree of directness and the type of modification employed, i.e., according to those means used to request in a socially appropriate manner (cf. 4.3.1). This scheme is not proposed as a rigid, definitive scheme, but rather as a coding scheme open to refinement and modification, depending on the language and culture under consideration (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b:274f). Although not without criticism — from researchers such as van Mulken (1996:692ff) in relation to the differentiation between mitigation and indirectness and also by Hassall (1997:190f) with regard to the criteria of selection for internal modifiers — it is this coding scheme which has proven most popular in analysing requests to date, having been employed in a number of studies, as recently as Rose (2000). Its use thus facilitates the comparison of findings with previous research outcomes.

Coding schemes for offers are scarce. Kasper (1981:113f) employed House/Kasper's (1981) coding scheme for requests to code her data and Aijmer (1996:189) suggests a further categorisation. Schneider (forthcoming), building on Schneider (1980), confines his analysis to a particular offer type (hospitable offers in this case), while other researchers do not use any detailed coding scheme but simply compare the actual syntactic realisations of the particular head act strategies employed (cf. Fukushima 1990a). The coding scheme employed in the present study for the analysis of offer realisations is based on the scheme employed by Kasper (1981:113f *passim*) and also on the CCSARP coding scheme. Similar to the case of requests, the level of directness and the degree of modification are the focus of analysis.

In the analysis of both requests and offers, the head act, i.e., the minimal unit which can realise a particular speech act (cf. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b:275), is isolated and the strategy employed in this head act is established. Following this, modification, whether internal or external, upgrading or mitigating, is identified. An example of the coding of the following request elicited from the present Irish English NS data for the kitchen situation serves to illustrate the scheme:

- (10) Kitchen, E10F:
 Could you clean the mess from the party up so I'll have room to cook.
- Head act strategy: "could you clean the mess from the party up" = query preparatory.
 - Internal modification: "could" = conditional (syntactic downgrader), "mess" = lexical upgrader,
 - External modification: "so I'll have room to cook" = grounder.

A further example taken from the present offer data for the bag situation is the following:

- (11) Bag, E4F:
...would you like me to help you with them, you seem weighed down.
– Head act strategy: “would you like me to help you with them” = query preparatory
– Internal modification: “would” = conditional (syntactic downgrader),
– External modification: “you seem weighed down” = grounder

The coding schemes employed in the present study for syntactic and also lexical and phrasal downgraders in requests and offers are outlined in 4.4.1.3.1 and 4.4.1.3.2 below. However, first it is necessary to examine the request and offer head act strategies employed in the present analysis since, where possible, the present analysis of learner mitigation concentrates on one particular type of head act strategy (most obviously the most frequently employed) since the mitigation employed is often related to the underlying strategy. As Faerch/Kasper (1989:222) note, this approach to data analysis serves to increase the validity of a particular investigation. Apart from the discussion here, important and indeed more detailed information pertaining to the head act strategies and to the internal modifiers identified is included in Appendix 10. It should be noted that only those strategies and modifiers which appeared in the present corpora are included in this overview. Let us first turn to the offer and request head act strategies distinguished in the present study.

Various numbers of request strategies have been identified in the literature. The scheme employed in the CCSARP, and also in the present study, includes nine sub-strategies and three super-strategies (cf. Appendix 10.1). Trosborg (1995:204ff), who employs a coding scheme based largely on that of the CCSARP identifies eight rather than nine levels of directness and four rather than three major request strategies — reflecting her differentiation between speaker- and hearer-based conditions in relation to conventionally indirect request strategies. Other categorisations include those of Aijmer (1996:132ff) who uses a scheme of eighteen strategies, Ervin-Tripp (1976:29ff) who distinguishes six strategies and Fraser (1978:8f) who identifies eighteen strategies.

The nine request strategies identified in this study range from direct to indirect strategies. Contrary to previous belief, no simple one-to-one relationship exists between the level of directness and degree of politeness, as shown by House-Edmondson (1986:290f) for German and English data and Blum-Kulka (1987:136ff) for English and Hebrew data. The most frequently employed strategy is the query preparatory, a strategy in which the preparatory conditions of a request are thematised in a conventionalised manner. An example from one of the present learners' utterances is the following request:

- (12) Kitchen, A15F: *Lutz, kannst du mir helfen ...*
(Kitchen, A15F (translation): Lutz, can you help me...).

Here the preparatory condition for requests “H is able to perform x. S believes H is able to do x” (Searle 1969:66) is queried in so conventional a manner that the speaker usually does not consider his/her ability to carry out the request, but rather simply complies or does not comply.

The nine CCSARP request strategies can be grouped into three categories of directness. These are impositives (direct requests), conventionally indirect requests and non-conventionally indirect requests, where impositives are the most direct, and non-conventionally indirect, the least direct super-strategies. The sub-strategies belonging to each of these request super-strategies are detailed in Appendix 10.1.

Similar to requests, offers can be divided into a number of super-strategies and sub-strategies which vary according to the level of directness. The super-strategies identified in the present study are, similar to requests, in order of increasing directness, impositives (direct offers), conventionally indirect offers and non-conventionally indirect offers. Eight sub-strategies were identified, namely mood derivables, hedged performatives, locution derivables and want statements which belong to the group of direct offers, suggestory formula, query preparatories and state preparatories which belong to the conventionally indirect offers group and finally, strong hints (non-conventionally indirect offers). Further details and examples are presented in Appendix 10.1. As is the case with requests, conventionally indirect strategies are popular realisations of offers. The following offer from the present German NS data for the beverage situation,

- (13) Beverage, G2F: ... *möchtest Du noch einen Kaffee trinken?*

(Beverage, G2F (translation): em ... would you like a coffee?),

queries the preparatory condition “H wants S to perform x” (cf. Searle 1969:66f) in a conventional manner, just as the state preparatory head act strategy from the present German NS dataset for the work experience situation,

- (14) Work experience, G28F: ... *Ich kann das mit Ihrem Sohn ja mal durchgehen.*

(Work experience, G28F (translation): I can em go through that with your son),

states the preparatory condition “S is able to perform x” (cf. Searle 1969:66f) in a conventionalised form (cf. Searle 1975:80).

Having presented a broad overview of the basic method of coding and the head act strategies employed in requests and offers, we now turn to refusals of offers — the analysis of which is based, not on head acts, but rather on the use of a number of semantic strategies. Categorisation schemes for refusals are scarce (cf. Gass/Houck 1999:10ff for an overview), and indeed there exists, to the best of my knowledge, no coding scheme for the refusals of offers alone. The most widespread scheme used for refusals is that developed by Beebe et al. (1990) for refusals of offers, suggestions, invitations and requests. It is usually this or a variation of this scheme which is employed in empirical research on refusals. The coding system

employed in the present study for refusals of offers is also based broadly on Beebe et al. (1990) although other adapted categorisations, such as those by Chen et al. (1995:126ff), Gass/Houck (1999:39ff), Houck/Gass (1996:53) and Möhl (1996:49ff), were also taken into account. Further developments were made as well, sub-categories, such as “speaker preference” (super-strategy = non-performative statement) and “hearer/speaker orientation” (super-strategy = excuse, reason, explanation), being added in the present study (cf. Appendix 10.1). In the area of modification, Blum-Kulka et al.’s (1989b:283ff) scheme was also consulted.

Beebe et al. (1990) identify both direct and indirect semantic strategies for realising refusals. For each of these, a number of super-strategies are given, which in turn encompass a variety of sub-strategies (cf. Appendix 10.1). The preponderance of indirect strategies reflects the status of refusals as dispreferred utterances and also their face-threatening nature (cf. 4.3.3). Adjuncts are also used to modify the utterance. The following example from the present German NS dataset serves to illustrate the use of the coding system employed. Here also, the strategies are identified first, followed by any modification which may exist:

(15) Maths, G4F:

Nein, nicht nötig, Du hast selbst schon genug zu tun. Ich schaff’ das schon irgendwie.

(Maths, G4F (translation): No, that’s not necessary. You’ve enough to do yourself. I’ll manage all right somehow).

- Semantic strategies: [Non-performative statement (No)] + [Attempt to dissuade interlocutor (Let interlocutor off the hook)] + [Excuse, reason, explanation (Speaker-oriented)] + [Attempt to dissuade interlocutor (Let interlocutor off the hook)]
- Modification: “*Ich schaff’ das schon irgendwie*”: “*schon*”: downtoner, “*irgendwie*”: hedge

The super-strategies are given in square brackets ([]), the sub-strategies in round (()) brackets.

4.4.1.3.1 Syntactic downgraders. The use of syntactic downgraders in the head act represents an important means of reducing the impact of requests and offers on the addressee. In increasing the relative level of indirectness, they provide the hearer with as much freedom of will as possible and in so doing, lessen any negative face-threat to the hearer in complying with the wishes of the speaker. Although refusals of offers also intrinsically threaten the hearer’s negative face-wants, syntactic downgraders do not play an important role in their realisation in the present data — or indeed in the realisations of those gathered by Hudson et al. (1995:15). A possible explanation is the less routinised form taken by refusals of offers. Whereas syntactic modification can be easily added to the pragmatic routine patterns found in abundance in offer and request realisations (most notably in the extensively-used query preparatory strategies), such modification is not as widely employed in some

of the most frequently-used refusal of offer realisations. Indeed, the use of syntactic modification is confined predominantly to excuses/reasons/explanations. An example may clarify this point — syntactic modification can be easily added to utterances such as “*Kannst Du x?*” (Can you *x*?) as in “*Könntest Du x?*” (Could you *x*?) (conditional) or “*Kannst Du nicht x?*” (Can you not *x*?) (negation) or “*Ich wollte fragen, ob Du x kannst?*” (I wanted to ask if you can *x*?) (conditional clause). However, such downgrading cannot be added to the many chunked pragmatic routines found in realisations of refusals of offers, such as “*Es geht schon*”, which realises an off-the-hook strategy, to “*Das ist nett von Ihnen*” ((Oh), that’s kind of you), which realises an expression of gratitude, or indeed to non-performative statements (e.g., “*Nein*” (No)). Syntactic downgraders in refusals are, thus, not analysed here. Rather the present investigation concentrates on syntactic downgraders employed in realisations of requests and offers.

The coding categories employed in this analysis were those developed for the CCSARP (cf. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b: 281ff). Table 15 provides an overview, and specific details and examples are included in Appendix 10.2.2. It is to be noted here that the particular combinations found in the data are specifically listed in this table and indeed also in the appendix, since they prove an interesting area of learner development.

Table 15. Categorisation of syntactic downgraders employed in requests and offers

Requests	Offers
– Interrogative	– Interrogative
– Negation of preparatory conditions	– Negation of preparatory conditions
– Subjunctive	– Conditional
– Conditional	– Aspect
– Aspect	– Tense
– Tense	– Conditional clause
– Conditional clause	– Conditional combination — conditional clause, conditional
– Conditional combination — conditional clause, conditional	– Tense, conditional, conditional clause
– Tense, conditional, conditional clause	– Negation of preparatory conditions, interrogative
– Aspect, tense, conditional, conditional clause	
– Negation of preparatory conditions, interrogative	
– Other combinations	

The following learner request from the present dataset in the notes situation provides us with an example of coding:

(16) Notes, A10F:

... *Ich wollte dir nur fragen ob ich vielleicht deine Aufzeichnungen ausleihen könnte!*

(Notes, A10F (translation): I just wanted to ask you if you could maybe lend me your notes!)

- Head act strategy: query preparatory
- Syntactic downgrading: *wollte* = tense, *ob* ... = conditional clause, *könnte* = conditional, i.e. = syntactic downgrading combination (tense, conditional, conditional clause)

In this case, the conditional form “*könnte*” (could) and the past tense form “*wollte*” are optional as they could have been substituted with “*kann*” (can) and “*will*” (want) respectively. Neither is the conditional clause obligatory, as the request could have been phrased as “*Könnte/kann ich vielleicht deine Aufzeichnungen ausleihen?*” (Could/can I borrow your notes?). Hence all three forms are identified as having a downgrading function.

4.4.1.3.2 Lexical and phrasal downgraders. Like syntactic downgraders, lexical and phrasal downgraders (L&PD) serve to mitigate the illocutionary force of a particular utterance. They are important in both realisations of refusals and requests due to the non-H-supportive nature of both of these illocutions. In other words, speakers use such modifiers in an attempt to soften the impact of a particular directive on the addressee and lessen any negative effect associated with the illocution. In contrast, the coding of lexical and phrasal downgraders in the offer realisations in the present data revealed that these modality markers do not play an important part in the realisation of this illocution. Although this fact may be viewed as surprising, given the part-directive nature of offers (cf. 4.3.2) and the importance of syntactic downgraders in concealing their directive characteristics (cf. 4.4.1.3.1), it is suggested that the need for mitigation is not as large as in realisations of requests, given the H-supportive nature of offers. Syntactic downgrading may be simply more efficient to employ than lexical and phrasal downgrading given the frequent use of pragmatic routine patterns in offer realisations. Given their lack of importance in offers, this use of lexical and phrasal downgrading was, consequently, not analysed in any further detail.

The categories employed in the present study for the analysis of lexical and phrasal downgraders with requests are those from the CCSARP project (cf. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b:283ff), except for the addition of an additional category, the “consultative device”, also employed by House/Vollmer (1988:120) and Trosborg (1995:212 passim). This category includes expressions aimed at seeking direct hearer involvement, as in such phrases as “Do you think?” The lexical and phrasal downgrader categories employed in the present study for the realisations of refusals are based on those from Hudson et al. (1995:15 passim) for refusals, themselves adopted from the schemes employed by Beebe et al. (1990) and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989b:283ff).

Table 16. Categorisation of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed in requests and refusals of offers

Requests	Refusals of offers
– Politeness marker	– Politeness marker
– Understater	– Understater
– Hedge	– Hedge
– Subjectivizer	– Subjectivizer
– Downtoner	– Downtoner
– Cajoler	– Cajoler
– Appealer	– Appealer
– Consultative device	– Combinations
– Combinations	

Table 16 provides a brief overview of the categories employed in the present analysis in realisations of requests and refusals of offers. The reader is referred to Appendix 10.2.1 for details and examples of this coding scheme.

Let us take an example to clarify use of this coding scheme. In the following German NS request from the present data, for instance,

- (17) Grammar, G18M: *Können Sie mir irgendwie weiterhelfen?*
 (Grammar, G18M (translation): Can you help me out in any way?),

the learner could have simply said: “*Können Sie mir weiterhelfen?*” (Can you help me out?). The hedge, “*irgendwie*” (in any way), however, functions as a downtoner and serves to reduce the directive nature of the utterance, lessening the imposition on the hearer.

The present analysis of lexical and phrasal downgraders in refusals of offers and requests concentrates on changing levels of overall use and also on developments in the types of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed over time. Two particular lexical and phrasal downgraders which are found to be of particular interest in this analysis are the politeness marker “*bitte*” (please) and the downtoner. In the following, we take a brief look at each of these modifiers and outline the specific difficulties which they pose for language learners and also the potential they hold for miscommunication.

The politeness marker “bitte” (please)

- (18) A: What’s the magic word?
 B: Please!
 A: That’s better (Data fabricated).

The above, a common exchange between adults and young children in both German and Irish society, represents an effort to teach children the norms of polite behaviour. Nevertheless, the appropriate use of “*bitte*” or “please”, pragmatic routines which open many doors for young children, is rather more complex than it may seem. Indeed, in a learner context, its inappropriate use encompasses scope for pragmatic failure.³⁹

The politeness marker “*bitte*”/“please” is not only a tool for being polite; rather it performs a double function. It is both an illocutionary force indicating device and a transparent mitigator, i.e., it acts to clarify the force of a request and also functions as a downgrader (cf. Sadock 1974). Herein lies the difficulty, as findings by House (1989a: 106ff) illustrate. House finds that the dual function of “*bitte*”/“please” makes them predominantly suitable for use in standard situations, because in such circumstances, the illocutionary indicating function is in harmony with the formal, clearly defined, context, and so does not “drown” the downtoning qualities of the adverb. Consequently, “*bitte*” and “please” serve to mitigate the request, whether it is realised using a query preparatory or a mood derivable strategy (imperative) (cf. 4.1.1.1.2 and Appendix 10.1). Aijmer (1996: 166) finds the same tendency in her analysis of “please” in the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English. She writes:

Please is especially frequent with imperatives. The large number of *please* after *could you* and after permission question questions (*can I, may I, could I*) is also noteworthy. Since *please* is mainly used in situations in which formal politeness is needed ... (original emphasis)

In non-standard request situations, however, the illocutionary force indicating devices “*bitte*”/“please” turn the query preparatory head act strategy, the most frequently used strategy in non-standard situations (cf. House 1989a: 109), into an order. This occurs because the query preparatory strategy is itself somewhat pragmatically ambiguous, and so the function of the politeness marker as an illocutionary force indicating device rather than as a downgrader comes to the fore. The effect is to curtail any scope for negotiation previously afforded, and, thus, move the utterance nearer the status of an imperative. The utterance thus becomes “...inappropriate” (House 1989a: 113) because impositives do not usually occur in non-standard situations, and indeed do not occur in any such situation in the present data. Consequently, it is uncommon for native speakers to use “*bitte*”/“please” in non-standard situations, and common in standard situations. As a result, maximum potential for pragmatic failure in learners’ use of this politeness marker in request realisations lies in its overuse in non-standard situations with a query preparatory strategy. In such instances, abuse of “*bitte*”/“please” would have the effect of bestowing the features of an order onto a request. An example may serve to illustrate this potential pragmatic failure. The example here is from the present learner data for the drive situation; a situation for which there were no incidents of “*bitte*” in the German NS data:

(19) Drive, A22F:

... *Kann ich in dein Auto zurück nach Hause fahren bitte?*

(Drive, A22F (translation): ... Can I go back home in your car, please?).

Instead, the German NS preferred an alternative lexical and phrasal downgrader, the downtoner, to mitigate their requests in this situation, as, for example, in their use of “*vielleicht*” (perhaps) in the following utterance:

(20) Drive, G16F:

... *Könntet ihr mich vielleicht mit nach Hause nehmen?*

(Drive, G16F (translation): ... Could you perhaps give me a lift home?)

It is clear that although the use of the pragmatic routine “*bitte*”/“please” in non-standard situations may clarify the illocutionary force of a particular utterance, it will not foster compliance or friendship. Instead its employment may rather lead to misunderstanding and may possibly cause annoyance to the native speaker who may feel s/he is being ordered about without reason. Why so have learners been found to employ such mitigation by such researchers as Faerch/Kasper (1989:234) when there are other options to choose from? This question is addressed in the following.

Learners’ inappropriate use of the politeness marker “*bitte*”/“please” is a clear example of their engagement in pragmatic overgeneralisation via a playing-it-safe strategy, as the illocutionary force indicating function of “*bitte*”/“please” satisfies learners’ primary need for clarity and explicitness in acting as a superficial “cure-all” in clarifying illocutionary force and mitigating requests. In addition, pragmatic overgeneralisation due to the strategy of least effort is also relevant in explaining learners’ use of this politeness marker since its syntactical form is relatively uncomplex. In contrast to downtoners, for example, it can — theoretically at least — be employed extrasententially rather than having to be embedded. Consequently, it puts less pressure on learners as regards planning (cf. also Trosborg 1995:296 passim). Finally, Trosborg (1995:296) points to the possibility of teaching error playing a part in learners’ overgeneralisation of “*bitte*”/“please”. She notes that it occurs frequently with requests in foreign language textbooks.

Unlike request realisations, the politeness marker “*bitte*”/“please” is not commonly used in refusals of offers in the present corpora, as will be shown in 5.3.2.2.1. The reason for this is suggested to lie in the fact that refusals of offers, unlike requests, threaten the hearer’s positive face since the offerer, in the act of offering has built up the refuser’s positive face but the offer is now being turned down (cf. 4.3.3). Use of the politeness marker “*bitte*”/“please”, however, ignores this fact and instead underlines the directive nature of refusals — its use is consequently rather unsuitable in most situations. This is illustrated in the following learner dialogue taken from the present dataset:

(21) Accident, A9F:

Pfarrer: ... komm ich werde dich ins Krankenhaus fahren.

Du: Bitte nicht. Alles ist in Ordnung ...

(Accident, A9F (translation):

Priest: ...come on, I'll bring you to the hospital.

You: Please don't. Everything is okay...)

Here the use of this politeness marker communicates the wishes of the refusing party in a direct manner. Indeed, so clear is the directive quality of this refusal that it can be suggested to lend a rather pleading quality to the refusal.

*Downtoners*⁴⁰

Downtoners are defined as:

Sentential or propositional modifiers which are used by a speaker in order to modulate the impact his or her request is likely to have on the hearer.

(Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b:284)

Examples of German downtoners found in the present data for request realisations include “vielleicht”, “doch”, “mal”, “eben”/“halt”, “schon”, “ruhig”, “einfach”; those found in the refusal data, “doch”, “eh”, “einfach”, “halt”, “mal”, “schon”, “vielleicht” and “wohl” (cf. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b:284, Helbig 1994:32ff, House/Kasper 1981:167 and Weydt et al. 1983:96ff). Cf. Appendix 10.2.1 for instances of their use. From these examples, it is clear that many downtoners in German are mitigating modal particles.⁴¹ These are described by Weydt et al. (1983:5) as follows:

Es sind unflektierte Wörter. Der Sprecher versucht mit ihnen, seine Aussagen zu modifizieren: Er versucht, seine Gesprächspartner zu beeinflussen, Stimmungen auszudrücken, Einschätzungen vorzunehmen, Zusammenhänge herzustellen usw.

(They are uninflected words. The speaker tries to modify his utterances with them: He tries to influence his conversational partner, express moods, make judgements, create links, etc.)

Omission of such downtoners by learners may be often unfortunately ascribed to a particular individual's lack of appropriate social upbringing since interpersonal relationships and particular expectations, which in other speech communities may be fulfilled using lexical, syntactic or prosodic devices, are largely signalled in German by means of these particles (cf. Zimmermann 1981:117). Their employment is therefore particularly important in communication which extends beyond an exchange of facts to the interpersonal sphere. Failure to use these downtoners in such instances encompasses potential for pragmatic failure (cf. Rost-Roth 1996).

Apart from fostering interpersonal relations, employment of the modal particles also lends an air of a certain familiarity with the German language

(Steinmüller 1981: 141). As Weydt et al. (1983: 5) observe:

Die jeweiligen Äußerungen werden dadurch [durch die Partikeln] idiomatischer, flüssiger, kurz: echter.

([When particles are used], the relevant utterances become more idiomatic, more fluent, in other words: more real.)

These particles thus enhance communication, making a speaker appear more fluent, more emotional, more expressive, warmer, friendlier (cf. Harden/Rösler 1981: 72f).⁴² They, therefore, as is the case with pragmatic routines, open up the doors of acceptance to a foreign culture. As Steinmüller (1981: 142) remarks:

Die Verstehensbereitschaft [der Muttersprachler] wird umso größer sein, je weniger abweichend die Sprachproduktion ist, d. h. je idiomatischer sie erscheint und je stärker sie den Standards nicht unbedingt der Hochsprache, sondern der eigenen Gruppensprache entspricht. Und das heißt weiter: je stärker der Sprecher Zugehörigkeit zur Gruppe und Teilhabe an ihrem Konsens signalisieren kann. Und hier kommt im Deutschen den Modalpartikeln eine wesentliche Rolle zu.

(The degree to which [native speakers] will be open to understanding will be all the larger the less deviant the speech production is, i.e. the more idiomatic it appears and the more it corresponds, not necessarily to the standard, but to their own group language. And from that follows: The more the speaker can signal that s/he belongs to the group and shares its consensus. And in German the modal particles play a significant role in this regard.)

However, despite these many benefits, many learners of German experience some difficulty using the mitigating modal particles, as noted by Weydt et al. (1983: 5):

Einer der Bereiche, in denen sich ein großes sprachliches Defizit bei Ausländern bemerkbar macht, die Deutsch als Fremdsprache gelernt haben, sind die sogenannten Abtönungspartikeln.

(One of the areas in which there is a large linguistic deficit to be noted among foreigners who have learned German as a foreign language is in the so-called mitigating particles.)

Such comments are substantiated by research by Faerch/Kasper (1989: 234) and Trosborg (1995: 260) who have found learners to generally under-use the downtoner. Without doubt, an inadequate use of the mitigating modal particles encompasses many drawbacks for learners. But why do such difficulties occur? One explanation relates to appropriate input, the other to difficulties of use. Let us turn first to input.

In the syntax- and system-oriented linguistics of the pre-1960s, issues of spoken language use were disregarded, and consequently the modal particles not investigated, but rather looked on derogatively as “... farblose Redefüllsel” (colourless fillers)

(Lindqvist 1961:24). Despite the pragmatic turn and the fact that pragmatic research has begun to leave its mark on foreign language textbooks to some extent (spoken aspects now included in texts) — the traces of history are still apparent in a lack of sufficient input and appropriate exercises (cf. Jiang 1994:20ff passim). Related to this is the fact that the interpersonal function of language (in which the modal particles play an important role) is often sacrificed particularly in advanced language classes in favour of the more prestigious referential function (cf. Watts 2000). Also, as Weydt et al. (1983:9) note in the introduction to their *“Kleine deutsche Partikellehre”*, interpersonal aspects, when addressed in class, do not reflect the complexity of real life situations. Added to this is the fact that the spoken input to which learners in the foreign language classroom are exposed usually consists of tape-recordings of German, which, as Watts (2000) notes, is normally only available to students in oral form once they reach an advanced level of linguistic competence. As a result, it cannot be consulted at a later point in time. Learners also have access to their classmates’ German and, most of all, to their teacher’s German, the latter who, in the interest of comprehensibility, may use teacher talk and filter non-referential aspects of language, such as the modal particles, from their idiolect in an effort to facilitate understanding (cf. 3.3.1).

Difficulties of use, the second major explanation of the low use of downtoners often characteristic of learners’ interlanguage, stem from the nature of downtoners themselves. The fact that the pragmatic function of a particular particle can vary with changing context makes them difficult to learn and indeed also to teach. In requests, *“doch”* can, for example, express impatience, as in *“Komm doch endlich zum Essen!”* or it may serve to increase the degree of politeness of the request, as in *“Setzen Sie sich doch (bitte)!”* (Helbig 1994:113). Such ambiguity is difficult to address for learner and teacher alike. Furthermore, the fact that the modal particles have homonyms in other word classes also increases learning difficulties.⁴³ Learners whose L1 does not make extensive use of modal particles, experience further problems with these words. Zimmermann (1981:117), who believes that the Sapir-Whorf-Hypothesis has some validity in the foreign language context as far as environment, value systems and forms of communication are concerned, comments, for example, in relation to the modal particles that:

Lernschwierigkeiten ... [sind] darauf zurückzuführen ..., daß in der Muttersprache kein äquivalentes Denkkonzept vorhanden ist, das einen positiven Transfer erleichtern würde.

(Learning difficulties [are] to be traced back to the fact that there is no equivalent way of thinking in the native language which would facilitate positive transfer.)

This is indeed the case with English, the L1 of the learners in the present study, where there is a lack of semantic equivalents, as illustrated in the translation of some of the German utterances in the present study (cf. 4.4.2) (cf. also Heggelung 2001).

However, it should be noted here that, as Heggelung (2001) rightly remarks, negative transfer may also be disadvantageous for learners whose L1 and L2 are rich in modal particles.

Further learner difficulties relate to the lack of referential meaning characteristic of the mitigating modal particles. Consequently, it is not surprising that they are often omitted by learners in favour of elements with a referential function. In other words, learners, faced with the challenge of communicating in a new language, first concentrate on the basic lexical and syntactic elements of the particular language in order to get their message across somehow (cf. Ellis 1992: 11). Modal particles are less useful in that regard and are, thus, often omitted.

Finally, the downtoner demands a higher level of pragmalinguistic competence of learners in German than, for example, the politeness marker *“bitte”*/“please” as it is relatively more difficult to employ — the latter can be placed extrasententially, demanding less planning at the psycholinguistic level, whereas the downtoner either occurs in initial position or is, as is more frequently the case, embedded. As a result, *“bitte”*/“please” is often overgeneralised (strategy of least effort) by learners in places where a native speaker may employ a downtoner (cf. Faerch/Kasper 1989: 234, Trosborg 1995: 427f).

4.4.2 Procedures of data analysis

The present analysis involves both quantitative and qualitative aspects. While the quantitative analysis concentrates on data from the production questionnaires and pre- and post-year abroad questionnaires, the qualitative analysis focuses on the retrospective data and also on data from the pre- and post-year abroad questionnaires. For the quantitative analysis, the statistical package employed was the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for Windows.⁴⁴ However, since the study includes a number of rather close detailed analyses, it was not always possible to submit the questionnaire data to rigorous quantitative comparisons. Consequently, the findings presented should be viewed as exploratory (cf. House 1996b: 235). In line with Blum-Kulka et al. (1989b: 275), misunderstood responses were treated as missing values, as were non-completed items. Descriptive statistics are employed in the presentation of results and, where possible and appropriate, also independent and paired samples t-tests which point to significant or insignificant differences between datasets.

The analysis of each of the three aspects of pragmatic and discourse competence under investigation concentrates on as many situations as possible. In some cases, however, it is necessary to focus on a number of similar situations to increase the validity of the data. This is, for instance, the case where the analysis focuses on the use of internal modification with conventionally indirect head act strategies. In standard situations, these strategies are employed to a smaller degree.

Consequently, values for these situations are not included in the analysis (cf. Faerch/Kasper 1989: 223ff).

Several examples from the present corpus are presented throughout the analysis. It should be noted that data is presented as it appeared on the questionnaires. Any orthographical, syntactical or other errors are not corrected for either the NS or learner data and any emphasis used is also included. The German data, written according to the old German spelling rules (the spelling reform had not been activated at the time of data collection), is not reworked according to the new rules. Also both the NS and learner German data, as well as being given in the original, is also translated into English for the present report. Errors present in the data are not, however, translated unless they led to ambiguities or were important for the analysis. In many cases, translations given represent only approximations of the original data. Translation difficulties experienced included, for example, the translation of downtoners, such as “*doch*” and “*mal*”, for which there is no straightforward equivalent in English (cf. House/Kasper 1981: 177 in this regard).⁴⁵ In the interest of readability and given space constraints, the utterances presented as examples are usually not given in full, but rather restricted to the relevant features under discussion. A number of dots (...) are included where the utterance in question is longer than quoted. This focusing of examples was particularly relevant for the analysis of offers and refusals of offers, where whole dialogues could only be reproduced sparingly. In all examples quoted, the relevant situation is mentioned and the informant responsible for a particular utterance is given according to the system of code-names described in 4.2.1 and 4.2.2.

CHAPTER 5

A pragmatic analysis

In this chapter, the findings of the present study in relation to learners' developing competence in the three aspects of pragmatic and discourse competence selected for analysis in 4.4.1 are presented and discussed. We start with the first aspect, discourse structure (5.1), and then proceed to pragmatic routines (5.2) and finally to internal modification (5.3).

The first step in each section of the analysis is the comparison of the learners' realisations in L(1), i.e., prior to the year abroad, with the German NS responses. Differences between NS and learner realisations are highlighted and, thus, also potential areas of development for learners given that this L2 data represents the assumed norm. Following this initial step, the presentation moves in each case to the main focus of the analysis, the investigation of changes in learners' use of German over time in the target speech community. This development data is also compared with the German NS data, and increased similarities or differences are discussed in the light of previous findings. Where a graph is given for illustrative purposes, the exact figures are found in Appendix 13. The research questions which guided the present investigation (cf. 1) serve to structure the presentation of results and subsequent discussion.

5.1 Discourse structure

The changing structure of learners' offer-refusal of offer exchanges is the focus of the following analysis. We begin with a description of learners' offer-refusal exchanges prior to the year abroad.

Is there evidence of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the target speech community?

Initial analysis

The analysis of offer-refusal exchange structures focuses on all six offer/refusal of offer situations. Figure 2 (cf. also Table A13–2, Appendix 13) reveals significant

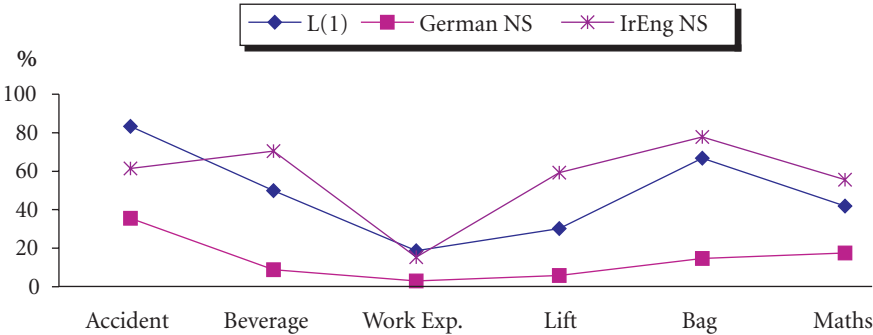


Figure 2. Frequency of offer-refusal exchanges of the form Initiate–*n*(Contra)–Satisfy, *n* > 1.

differences between the present learners’ exchanges in L(1) and those of the German NS. Although the situations with the highest and lowest levels of reoffering are the same in the German NS and L(1) datasets (highest: accident situation, lowest: work experience situation), reoffering is found to be much more common in the learner data. Indeed, in all six situations under analysis, the L(1) level is higher than the German NS level. The accident situation is the only situation which yields any substantial degree of reoffering in the German NS data.

An independent samples t-test confirms the statistical significance of the differences recorded between the German NS and L(1) data at the 99% level in five of the six situations — the exception being the work experience situation. In this situation, the differences found were not significant, both the German NS and learner data revealing rather low levels of reoffers. However, here too, the general trend follows that of the data from the other five situations, with the German NS reoffering to a lower extent.

Examples of offer-refusal exchange structures from the present German NS and learner datasets can be found in 4.4.1.1 in the discussion on coding. Here the dialogue presented from the German NS informant, G28F, represents an example of the simple exchange structures preferred by German NS (example (4)). On the other hand, the offer-refusal of offer exchanges presented from the Irish informants E20F (example (5)), E11F (example (8)) and A1F (example (6)) reflect the more complex exchange structure found here to be frequently employed by the Irish learners.

Development issues

A comparison of the L(2) and L(3) data with the L(1) and with the German NS data suggests that time spent in the target speech community had a clear influence on

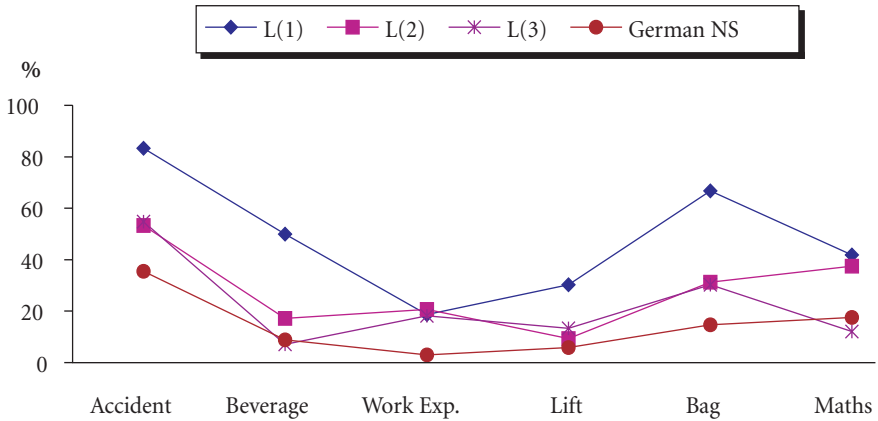


Figure 3. Frequency of offer-refusal exchanges of the form Initiate- n (Contra)-Satisfy, $n > 1$ — Developmental focus.

learners' offer-refusal exchange structures. The results are presented in Figure 3 and Table A13–2, Appendix 13.

In five of the six situations, the L(1) level of reoffers shows a clear decrease in reoffering towards the L2 norm. The work situation represents an exception: in this situation, the level of reoffering remains approximately stable. However, the L(1) level in this situation is the lowest of all situations and is also the most similar to the L2 norm. A paired samples t-test shows the recorded differences between L(1) and L(3) to be statistically significant at the 99% level in the beverage, bag and maths situations and at the 95% level in the accident and lift situations.

Learners' relative levels of reoffering by situation change somewhat over time. Despite decreases, levels remain highest in the accident situation and second highest in the bag situation, but substantial changes are found in the relative level of reoffering used in the beverage situation. Whereas the beverage situation had included the third highest amount of reoffers in L(1), it includes the lowest number of reoffers of all six situations in L(3). Moreover, the work experience situation included higher levels of reoffering than the lift and maths situations in L(3) despite having had the lowest number of reoffers in L(1).

Comparing learners' reoffering levels in L(3) to the German NS norm, we see that levels are very close in the beverage, lift and maths situations — with the level in the maths situation even somewhat lower than the German NS level in L(3). However, despite large decreases in reoffering levels, the L(3) level remains higher than the German NS norm in a number of situations — particularly in the accident and bag situations.

The change in learner behaviour appears to take place quite early in the course of their stay in the target speech community. In four of the five situations where a

change is recorded — i.e., in the accident, beverage, lift and bag situations — the levels decrease in L(2) after only approximately two months in the L2 community. These levels remain approximately stable in L(3). In the maths situation, the development is somewhat slower — not until L(3) do reoffering levels drop considerably.

Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?

Transfer — Initial analysis

A glance at Figure 2 (cf. also Table A13–2, Appendix 13) clearly shows that negative pragmatic transfer from the L1 is the cause of the overall statistically significant differences between the offer-refusal discourse structure employed by the Irish learners and that employed by L2 speakers prior to the year abroad. Although the L(1) and IrEng NS levels of reoffering are not harmonious in all situations — the L(1) level being lower than the IrEng NS level in the beverage, lift, bag and maths situations, for example — the level of reoffering in the IrEng NS and L(1) data is higher than in the German NS data in all situations.

The situational variation recorded in the L(1) data appears to a large extent to be a reflection of the IrEng NS data. For example, least reoffers are found in the work experience situation in both datasets. Similarly, a rather large number of reoffers are found in both datasets in the accident, bag and beverage situations — albeit with some differences also recorded. The highest number of reoffers is seen, for instance, in the accident situation in the learner data in L(1), whereas in the IrEng NS data the level of reoffering in this situation is only the third highest of the six situations.

The high level of reoffering in Irish English and also in the present learners' offer-refusal exchanges in German would seem to point to the existence of ritual offers and refusals of offers in the Irish, but not in the German, culture (cf. 4.4.1.1 on this suggestion).¹ Indeed, in the German NS data, reoffering is of importance only in one situation, namely in the accident situation. It is suggested that the relatively high level of reoffers in this situation is a reflection of the substantive nature of reoffers when they occur in German as the obligation to offer is strong in this situation (cf. 4.1.1.1.2). In other words, it appears that reoffers in German are substantive rather than being motivated by convention. Consequently, potential misunderstandings as outlined in 4.4.1.1 may result from learners' transfer of their L1 norms.²

The presence of ritual reoffers in a particular variety of language does not mean that they are used by all informants in every situation. Whether a reoffer occurs or not appears to depend firstly on whether the initiative offer was sincere in the first place, as the sincerity condition is conventionally fulfilled in the reoffer. It may be

suggested that some of the offers elicited in the work experience situation may not have been sincere — a feature which may partly explain the low number of reoffers in the situation. Some informants commented, for instance, that they themselves would not have offered help in this situation. Indeed, although this situation was rated realistic by NS of both languages in the assessment questionnaire issued (cf. Appendix 7), it was judged to be a seldom occurrence on a scale of 1–4 by IrEng NS and German NS (2.78 and 2.56 respectively) where 1 represented “an everyday occurrence” and 4 “would never happen”.

A further possible factor which would seem to influence whether an offer exchange will include ritual reoffers or not is the particular situational constellations. This is another possible explanation of the low number of reoffers in the work experience situation in the IrEng NS and learner data since it is a relatively formal situation: there is social distance between the interactants and also a status differential, with the offerer being of lower status. In addition, the situation reveals the lowest overall degree of obligation to offer and lowest difficulty in refusing of the situations under investigation.

Transfer — Development issues

Transfer from the learners' L1 decreases over time spent in the target speech community (cf. Table A13–2, Appendix 13) with the number of situations in which the learner level is somewhat lower than the IrEng NS level increasing and the overall gap between the learner and IrEng NS level widening. The work experience situation, in which learner levels remain approximately the same as the IrEng NS level over time, represents the exception.

In the individual situations, some variation appears regarding transfer. The beverage situation, for example, had included the third highest amount of reoffers in L(1) — somewhat in line with the IrEng NS data where it included the second highest amount of reoffers; however, in L(3), this situation contains the lowest number of reoffers of all six situations.

The need for metapragmatic data

But how can we be sure that transfer from Irish English really did decrease over time spent in the target speech community and that these learners' competence did increase? Maybe German NS input and learner output opportunities were not responsible for the Irish learners' discourse competence moving towards the L2 norm? Maybe the present learners did not really adopt the German NS norm in realising offers? Could the statistically significant development charted here not have been simply due to waning motivation on the part of the learners in completing the questionnaire three times over the year abroad? Might it not have been

Table 17. Relative movement of Irish learners’ offer-refusal exchanges from the form Initiate–*n*(Contra)–Satisfy, *n*> 1 to Initiate–Contra–Satisfy over time^a

Accident	Beverage	Lift	Bag	Maths
34.2	85.8	56	54	71.1

^a All values are expressed in percentages.

because of this that they wrote less, leading to the reduction in reoffers in offer-refusal exchanges?

A glance at the learner values for the accident situation in Figure 3 and in Table A13–2, Appendix 13 provides some initial evidence that a decrease in motivation was not the reason for the move towards the L2 norm reported, since in this situation the number of exchanges of the form Initiate–*n*(Contra)–Satisfy, where *n*> 1, remains high in the third learner dataset, L(3). This can be contrasted with the other situations in which changes were more substantial. Indeed, as is illustrated in Table 17, which shows the relative decrease in reoffers over time by situation, the relative decrease was by far the lowest in the accident situation.

It appears that the Irish learners continued to see a need for a significant degree of negotiation in the accident situation but not in the remaining situations, where the number of reoffers in L(3) is very low compared to that in the L(1) data. Irrespective of the reason for the higher level of reoffering in the accident situation — possibly due to the relatively high obligation to offer in this situation — the fact remains that learners continue to reoffer; motivation does not therefore appear to be an issue in the present analysis.

Despite this indication of the validity of the data gathered, the FDCT data was triangulated via data from the retrospective interviews which took place at the end of the year abroad and, to a lesser extent, via data from the post-year abroad questionnaire. The comments elicited clearly support the findings of the FDCT. The following section is divided into three parts. The first part (“*No means no!*”) highlights learners’ awareness of cross-cultural differences on the level of the discourse structure of offer exchanges, and the second and third parts underline not only learners’ awareness of such differences but also their awareness of their adherence to (“*When in Rome ...*”) or divergence from (“*But I want to be myself!*”) L2 conventions.

“*No means no!*”

Retrospection on the lift situation, in which informants roleplayed refusing a lift offered by a German NS, provides extensive information on learners’ perception of differences at the discourse level. Asked by the IrEng NS researcher whether the roleplay of this situation which they had just enacted with a German NS would have

been any different, in their opinion, had the person offering been an IrEng NS speaking English, several informants referred to differences in German and Irish offer-refusal of offer exchanges. Some of their comments are presented in the following; “they” in all these examples refers to IrEng NS:

- (22) Lift, A13F:
They probably would have offered a lot more.
- (23) Lift, A6M:
Yeah, they would have been keep on keep on at you to keep on coming and they would have asked you a couple of times. They wouldn’t just ask you once.
Would’ve asked you again.
- (24) Lift, A16F:
Em — they probably would have said are you sure? — maybe once or twice ...
she just said, okay, goodbye.
- (25) Lift, C5M:
... someone in Ireland would probably ask you again and again.

Responses to a general question posed on the post-year abroad questionnaire as to whether students felt it necessary to adopt a more direct/indirect manner of speaking in German than in English also reflected the content of the above retrospective data, with some remarks focusing particularly on the case of offers and accepting offers:

- (26) A6M:
If a German offers you a drink and if you refuse out of politeness, he/she won’t offer a second time like Irish people.

A further question on this questionnaire which focused on how learners would describe the German people in general also yielded comments which addressed this issue:

- (27) A1F:
Direct — ‘no’ means ‘no’ and ‘yes’ means ‘yes’.

There is no doubt that the comments from both of these sources of metapragmatic data reflect an awareness of cross-cultural differences in offer-refusal exchanges in German and Irish English. They also display the effect of critical incidents on learners’ awareness of the German norm (cf. especially example (26) in this regard).

In addition, informants’ awareness of cultural differences on the general level of directness between German and Irish English changes over time abroad. This data is also of relevance here, since accepting an initiative offer rather than refusing out of politeness may be seen as an example of directness (cf. example (27)). On the pre-year abroad questionnaire, directness was the fourth most frequently mentioned characteristic of the German people (mentioned by seven people). In the post-year abroad questionnaire, however, directness was the most common characteristic

associated with the German people, being mentioned by 26 informants (cf. Appendix 11). It may be suggested that this general awareness of culture-specific differences also contributed to learners' changing L2 pragmatic competence.³

"When in Rome..."

As well as information regarding informants' awareness of cultural differences in the area of offering and refusing, information was also elicited concerning informants' awareness of how they themselves act in such situations and also concerning their adherence to the L2 pragmatic norm (cf. *"But I want to be myself"* below on rejection of the L2 norm).

In the maths situation, the learner informants were required to offer help. Informants were asked whether they would have offered in the same way as they had in the roleplay if their interlocutor had been another Irish person and they had been speaking in English. One learner commented:

(28) Maths, A6M:

I would have been a bit more, eh, I would would have asked them a couple more times. I would, like, have said, can I help you there? ... I would have been more adamant, more insistent.

In other words, this learner does not insist as much in German as he would in his mother tongue, English. The following comments elicited to a general question posed on the post-year abroad questionnaire as to whether students felt it necessary to adopt a more direct/indirect manner of speaking in German than in English also highlight their belief of the need to adopt different norms when acting in a foreign language:

(29) A15F:

The Germans don't understand you when you say no and mean yes — e.g. refusing an offer of a drink, food, etc. Forget the Irish polite way and say yes as you won't be offered again.

(30) A17F:

You only get one chance with Germans. If you want something, you have to say so, because they won't offer again.

Further remarks in this context included some comments in the interview pertaining to the lift situation, where the German NS issues the offer. Learners who had highlighted differences on the discourse level between the Irish and German norms in the interview were asked whether they would tend to adopt the Irish rather than the German norm in offering/refusing in German.

(31) Lift, A16F:

No (laugh) no you just — no, you don't.

(32) Lift, C1F:

No, not to a German. If they say no, I'd just go, oh, okay ... I think I just find them a bit more, like, sort of stand-offish or something so when they say no, I think they mean it, you know the way in Ireland when we say no, no, you know we actually do want it.

These comments are from learners who favoured adoption of the German NS norm. In both of these cases, "no" relates to the suggestion that the Irish rather than the German NS norm should be adopted. Indeed, learner C1F highlights a feeling of unease or awkwardness in engaging in reoffering in German. Further responses to the same general question put to learners who had themselves suggested cross-cultural differences in exchange structure highlight the same reluctance to transfer the L1 norm:

(33) Maths, A21F:

... you'd know Germans are more direct and they'd say, you know ... They're more direct. You have to switch sometimes and tap in to their mentality and be like them a bit just so they'll understand you.

(34) Maths, A27F:

Researcher: Would you do the same, would you reoffer, in German?

A27F: Probably not, no.

Researcher: Why?

A27F: They mean what they say and that's it.

(35) Late, A10F:⁴

It's just, like, you know, with the cup of tea, like. Like, we're getting different now, like, if somebody comes in here and if we say 'do you want a cup of tea?' and they say 'no,' I, that's it, like, I won't go, 'Oh, of course, you will,' like. Whereas when we came here first, before, I would have gone 'Are you sure, like?, it's no problem, I can make you a cup of tea.' Now I sit down as well (laugh) ... but, like, my parents noticed it when I went home as well, like ... If someone came in the door: 'Do you want me to make you a cup of tea.' 'Oh, no' and I bugger off, like. 'You should offer a second time' (parents) 'you should offer a second time,' 'We don't do that in Germany' But you do, you pick it up, like. You know that when a German says no, they mean no, ... and if they say yes, they mean yes ... whereas an Irish person doesn't mean it ... They know that if they say no, they know you're going to ask them two or three more times and they'll get a chance to say, 'Oh, well, of course, I will.'

... but, like, you see, I'm the same now as well. Before when we were at home, we'd always say, 'oh, no' and then 'oh, okay,' but now, if I want it, I'll say 'yes,' if I don't, I'll say 'no,' because you know with the Germans, if you say 'no' the first time, they're not going to ask again ... but I wanted a cup of tea!

Indeed, the last learner's adherence to L2 norms is so far advanced that she has found herself transferring the L2 norm of offering into her L1.

“But I want to be myself!”

So far we have looked at awareness of differences between the L1 and L2 norms and learners' adherence to the L2 norm. The next important issue relates to learners' deviation from the target German NS norm. In this context, learners were asked in the retrospection following the maths situation whether they thought a German NS would have acted any differently to the way they, as learners of German, had acted in offering help in this particular situation in the roleplay. Some admitted deviating from the NS norm:

- (36) Maths, A7M:

Yeah, they [Germans] would have offered help, but, em, ... I don't know, they just wouldn't have been so persistent, not persistent, so anxious to give you help.

- (37) Maths, A8F:

A8F: ... I think if they weren't really that friendly with you, they'd say, okay, well, I offered.

Researcher: *Do you think it'd be the same in Ireland?*

A8F: No, I think, I think in Ireland, they'd be more, you know what I mean, they're more, em, they wouldn't want anyone think they wouldn't offer, whereas here, you know, they offer, you both know you've offered, so you don't think any more about it, sort of thing ... In Ireland, well, unless they don't like you, they're going to kind of say 'go on'.

In both instances here the learners show an awareness of the differences in offer-refusal exchange structures in German and Irish English. However, they both also realise that in their use of language, at least in the roleplay they had enacted, they had deviated from the L2 norm.

Similarly, other learners despite having noticed cultural differences in the area of reoffers, told of a preference for the Irish way when asked whether they, given an awareness of differences, favoured the L1 or L2 norm when speaking German. The reasons they cited pertained to politeness and habit:

- (38) Lift, C5M:

C5M: ... probably ..., the Irish way

Researcher: *Why?*

C5M: It's more polite.

- (39) Lift, A4F:

A4F: I'd probably say ah, go on, go on.

Researcher: *Why? Why, if they don't do it?*

A4F: I don't know, like, it's just habit, like.

Researcher: *So, are you conscious of that?*

A4F: I probably wouldn't do it as often, but just one time.

Researcher: *Why not?*

A4F: I don't know, well, I know for me, if somebody asks you something first, it's, 'ah, no', and then, if they ask again — 'okay,' but, like, I mean, that's, I think, that's just habit.

- Researcher:* Do you think you should stop saying ‘ah, go on, go on’?
A4F: I’d say it’s probably a bit annoying maybe for, like, people who don’t know the way we go on.
Researcher: Would you feel uncomfortable, if you didn’t say it — if you said it once?
A4F: ... I’d feel rude.
Researcher: And so, if they only ask once, do you feel, oh, they only asked me once, I really wanted that?
A4F: Ah no, I think now, it’s, like, I’m more inclined to say straight away out.

The comments included in this section all highlight learners’ reluctance to adopt the L2 norm despite having noticed differences between the L1 and L2 norms. However, even these informants did show some adoption of German NS norms in their acceptance of offers in German as is seen in the last line of the interview with informant A4F. She admits to accepting “straight out” what she wants, despite insisting on using reoffers.

Transfer — Summary

The metapragmatic data leaves no doubt that the findings obtained from the FDCT regarding the development of learners’ competence in realising offers are not mere products of the data collection process but rather represent a genuine decrease in transfer and thus a development towards the German NS norm in learners’ L2 pragmatic competence. With time in the target speech community, the majority of learner informants in the present study did therefore adopt the L2 norm, not because their motivation in completing the questionnaire had waned, but because they considered it more appropriate. Indeed, the metapragmatic data suggests that the level of awareness of cross-cultural differences was actually higher than the production data suggests due to some individual learners’ insistence on following L1 norms in their offer-refusal exchange structures despite an awareness and, in most cases, an understanding, of the L2 pragmatic norm.

What implications do any changes or lack of changes in learners’ L2 pragmatic competence have for our understanding of the development of L2 pragmatic competence?

The increases recorded in the present FDCT and metapragmatic data in learners’ L2 competence in offer-refusal of offer exchange structures over time spent in the target speech community provide support for Schmidt’s (1993) noticing hypothesis of L2 pragmatic development. In other words, it can be suggested that the present

learners “noticed the gap” between that which they knew of L2 conventions in offering and refusing and that which the native speakers of the L2 knew, i.e., via input over the study abroad period learners grew in awareness of culture-specific norms and, with time, also in understanding.

It is not always the case that such noticing opportunities occur in a particular context. However, the study abroad context appears to have provided the necessary input for noticing differences on the exchange level. Indeed, it appears that learners’ awareness of L2-specific conventions in offer-refusal exchanges exemplified in the metapragmatic comments volunteered by the fourteen different informants above is primarily a result of critical incidents which forced learners to attempt to understand deviations from their L1 background. Explicit advice, such as, “Forget the Irish polite way and say yes as you won’t be offered again,” offered by A15F (cf. example (29)) and indeed similar advice offered by other learners (cf. in particular examples (26), (30), (33)) leaves no doubt but that such was the case. Also, metapragmatic comments, such as “... I think now, it’s, like, I’m more inclined to say straight away out” when she wants to accept something (example (39)) from learners, such as A4F, also point, albeit somewhat more indirectly, to similar incidents (cf. also examples (22), (23), (24), (25), (27), (31), (32), (34), (35), (36), (37)). In addition, in the particular case of offers/refusals, personal and reported experiences of cases of sitting for hours parched after refusing a drink without meaning to do so come to mind.⁵ Finally, it is noticeable that the largest relative drop in reoffering and in transfer from the L1 over the year abroad was recorded in the beverage situation — a finding which can possibly be explained by the fact that many critical incidents may have occurred within such a basic hospitality context.

Apart from the opportunity of coming to grips with L2 conventions on the basis of input, it is — although not explicitly stated in the metapragmatic comments — also possible that learner output may have triggered negative evidence which may have led learners to grow in awareness of the non-L2-like nature of their IL output as well, and, thus, contributed to the changes in learners’ pragmatic knowledge during the study abroad period. Learners themselves may, for example, have engaged in reoffering, and following such incidences received strange responses, funny looks and patronising comments such as “*Ich hab’ doch nein gesagt*” (I said no, didn’t I?) from native speakers of German (cf. 1). Indeed, comment (35) reveals just such an incident, albeit with reference to transfer from the L2 to the L1.⁶

Although noticing opportunities led to adherence to L2 behaviour in many instances of learner behaviour, individual differences were recorded where the L2 norm was rejected. Two particular reasons were identified in this regard. On the one hand, individual learners may have grown in awareness of differing offer-refusal exchange structures in German and Irish English but possibly not in an understanding that such differences are mere conventions rather than signals that a particular culture is more or less polite than another. Informant C5M in comment (38) above

(cf. “*But I want to be myself*”), for example, associates the Irish way with a higher degree of politeness. On the other hand, however, other learners reject the L2 norm but reveal an understanding of the L2 system. Participant A4F in comment (39) in the same section remarks, for instance, “I’d say it’s probably a bit annoying maybe for, like, people who don’t know the way we go on.” The expression “the way we go on” here indicates this informants’ awareness that mere convention underlies such cross-cultural differences. The rejection of the L2 norm also reflects researchers’ recent misgivings about its appropriateness.

Can one speak of stages of acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence?

Since the development in learners’ offer-refusal of offer exchange structures towards the L2 norm was recorded rather early in the present learners’ sojourn in the target speech community — approximately two months after the learners’ arrival in their host universities — it can be proposed that this feature of L2 pragmatic competence, once noticed, is rather easy to adopt.

5.2 Pragmatic routines

The framework for the analysis of learners’ use of pragmatic routines over time in the target speech community follows Davies’ (1987: 79ff) categories of routines of varying levels of cross-cultural equivalence given House’s (1995: 95) belief that transfer is the source of many pragmatic errors found in advanced learners’ use of pragmatic routines (cf. 4.4.1.2). Two broad categories are distinguished here, namely cases of non-equivalence (cf. 5.2.1) and cases of partial equivalence (cf. 5.2.2). Sub-categories are also addressed.

The analysis is organised as follows: issues of changes in learners’ use of pragmatic routines and, where appropriate, questions concerning pragmatic transfer, i.e., research questions 1 and 2, are addressed for each sub-category individually. In the concluding section (5.2.3), the research questions pertaining to the implications of the findings for our understanding of the development of L2 pragmatic competence and possible stages of development are taken up for all pragmatic routines analysed.

5.2.1 Cases of non-equivalence

Kecskés (1999: 307), in a cross-sectional study of learners’ use of pragmatic routines, notes that in some cultures pragmatic routines may be required in situations where in another culture they may not. This, he remarks,

... can cause serious confusion because both the concept and its 'denotator' should be newly established in the conceptual base of the learner, or, vice versa, the existing concept and its symbol should be canceled. (original emphasis)

Consequently, unaware of such differences, learners may mistakenly adopt their L1-script despite the fact that it is inappropriate in an L2-context. Two central levels of difficulty for learners due to non-equivalence can be identified:

- Situations requiring a pragmatic routine in one language but an ad hoc formulation in the other,
- Situations requiring a pragmatic routine in one language but no remark in the other.⁷

Both situations are of relevance in the present analysis. In the following study of the linguistic form which reoffers take in Irish English and German, it is shown that many of the reoffers elicited from IrEng NS are realised using pragmatic routines — an important pragmatic routine being of the form “Are you sure?” In contrast, those reoffers which occur in the German NS data take an ad hoc form. Hence, it appears as if we have a case of the first type of non-equivalence where the same situation requires a pragmatic routine in Irish English but an ad hoc formulation in German. However, if we take the findings of 5.1 above into account where it was shown that reoffers are more widespread in Irish society than in German society, and also consider the function of pragmatic routines in dealing with recurrent face-threatening situations (cf. 4.4.1.2), the findings below instead appear to lend weight to the suggestion that ritual reoffers exist in Irish English but not in German. In other words, reoffers occurring in the German data are found to be of a substantive nature, i.e., they are not motivated by mere convention but instead tend to occur in cases where the hearer is in doubt as to whether the speaker should actually have refused an offer or not. Consequently, we have a situation where a pragmatic routine is frequently employed in the Irish culture but no remark is required in the German culture given the lack of ritual refusals in German, i.e., the second case of non-equivalence described above.

It will be shown in the following that the non-equivalence of the utterances “Are you sure?” and “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” on a pragmalinguistic level across the Irish and German cultures leads to difficulties for the present learners in their realisations of offers since apart from employing reoffers in inappropriate situations (cf. 5.1), the form which such reoffers take is also found to be less than appropriate given the lack of rituality of “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” in German. Miscommunication is the possible consequence. Let us turn now to the learner data and subsequently to learner developments across time.

Is there evidence of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the target speech community?

Initial analysis

The learner dataset prior to the year abroad displays a high level of offer-refusal exchanges of the form Initiate– n (Contra)–Satisfy, where $n > 1$, as shown in 5.1. Figure 4 presents an overview of the linguistic form which these reoffers take. Here we see that in every situation except the work experience situation, many of these reoffers are realised using the form “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*”, or a further variety, “*Wenn Du/Sie sicher bist/sind?*” Employment varies by situation, with levels highest in the bag, accident and lift situations (cf. also Table 18).

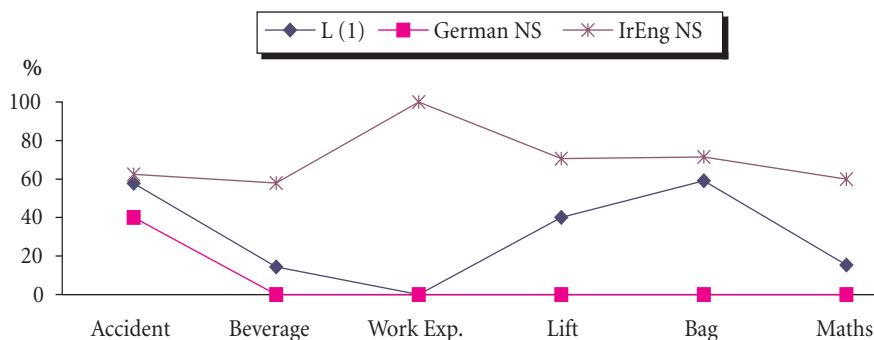


Figure 4. Frequency of “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*”/“Are you sure?” in offer/refusal situations with exchange structure Initiate– n (Contra)–Satisfy, $n > 1$.

I = Initiate, C = Contra, Sa = Satisfy

The following example illustrates one learner’s use of “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” when reoffering in German:

(40) Beverage, A17F:

Onkel: Keiner da?

Du: Kann ich dir eine Tasse Kaffee anbieten.

Onkel: Nein danke. Ich war nur in der Umgebung und wollte ganz kurz vorbei kommen.

Du: Bist du sicher? Das ist wirklich kein Problem.

Onkel: Danke. Sag deinen Eltern, daß ich gekommen bin.

(Beverage, A17F (translation):

Uncle: No one there?

You: Can I offer you a cup of coffee?

Uncle: No thanks. I was just in the area and wanted to call around for a second.

- You:* Are you sure? It's really no problem.
Uncle: No thanks. Tell your parents that I came.)

A further example in the learner data is as follows:

(41) Bag, A15F:

- Du:* *Hallo, kann ich dir helfen?*
Junge Frau: *Nein danke, es geht.*
Du: *Bist du sicher?*
Junge Frau: *Ja wirklich es ist nicht so schwer, aber vielen Dank.*
Du: *Bitte schön.*
Junge Frau: *Tschüß.*

(Bag, A15F (translation):

- You:* Hi, can I help you?
Girl: No thanks, It's all right.
You: *Are you sure?*
Girl: Yes really it's not that heavy, but thanks.
You: Not at all.
Girl: Bye.)

A comparison of this Irish learner data in L(1) with the present German NS data reveals considerable differences. Not only, as shown in 5.1, is the incidence of reoffers much lower in the German NS dataset but the reoffers which do occur in this corpus are realised by other linguistic means than those employed by the Irish learners. Indeed, only in the accident situation is the form “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” employed by these German NS. The variety “If you're sure”/“*Wenn Du/Sie sicher bist/sind?*” does not occur in the German dataset at all. Neither is any other conventionalised form employed to realise reoffers in German. Instead, reoffers made by German NS are realised using ad hoc formulations which relate to the specific offer in question. The ad hoc nature of some of these reoffers is illustrated in the following examples from the present German NS data. In the first example, the reoffer is realised by “*Ach komm, Zeit für 'nen Kaffee hast Du doch*” (Ah come on, you've time for a coffee) and in the second example, it takes the form of “*Das ist doch Schwachsinn. Laß' dir doch helfen*” (But that's rubbish. Let me help you):

(42) Beverage, G15M:

- Du:* *Darf ich 'nen Kaffee anbieten?*
Onkel: *Eigentlich wollte ich nur kurz hallo sagen da ich in der Nähe war.*
Du: *Ach komm, Zeit für 'nen Kaffee hast Du doch.*
Onkel: *Nee nee, ich will dann mal wieder. Tschüß und Grüße.*

(Beverage, G15M (translation):

- You:* Can I offer you a cup of coffee?
Uncle: Actually, I just wanted to say a quick hello since I was nearby.
You: *Ah come on, you've time for a coffee.*
Uncle: No, no, I have to go. Bye and say hi to everyone.)

(43) Maths, G24F:

Du: Wenn Du willst, können wir zusammen lernen. Ich hätte am Donnerstag und Freitag morgen Zeit.

Freund: Keine schlechte Idee, aber ich muß da irgendwie alleine durch.

Du: Das ist doch Schwachsinn. Laß' dir doch helfen.

Freund: Nein, ich muß es alleine schaffen.

Du: Wie du meinst. Wenn Du es Dir noch anders überlegst, ruf' mich an.

(Maths, G24F (translation):

You: If you want, we can study together. I'd have time on Thursday and Friday morning.

Friend: Not a bad idea, but somehow I have to get through it on my own.

You: But that's rubbish. Let me help you.

Friend: No, I have to do it on my own.

You: Whatever you think. If you change your mind, give me a ring.)

As far as the accident situation is concerned, it is suggested that the large occurrence of “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” is related to the high obligation to offer. In other words, the reoffer in this situation is of a substantive form and “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” (Are you sure?) is used as an ad hoc formulation. That this may indeed be the case is underlined by looking more closely at the following situation, in which the form “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” occurs:

(44) Accident, G10F:

Pfarrer: Soll ich Sie ins Krankenhaus fahren?

Du: Nein, nein, es ist alles in Ordnung. Ich muß nicht ins Krankenhaus.

Pfarrer: Sind Sie sicher? Wäre es nicht besser, wenn jemand Sie mal anschaut, Sie könnten auch innere Verletzungen haben.

Du: Nein danke, mir geht es wirklich gut, nur ein paar Kratzer.

(Accident, G10F (translation):

Priest: Shall I drive you to the hospital?

You: No, no, everything is okay. I don't need to go to hospital.

Priest: Are you sure? Would it not be better if someone had a look at you, you could have internal injuries.

You: No thanks, I'm really fine, just a few scratches.)

In this situation, the priest, on hearing the injured party explaining “*Ich muß nicht ins Krankenhaus*” (I don't need to go to hospital), wishes to confirm that this is actually true. He thus asks “Are you sure?” and continues to explain that the cyclist may have internal injuries — a possible reason why s/he may not be wise to refuse the offer in question.

The limited use of pragmatic routines in realising reoffers in German is suggested to relate to the relatively small number of reoffers in German — a result, it can be suggested, of the absence of ritual reoffers (cf. 5.1). This lack of demand for an efficient means of reoffering reduces the likelihood of the development of a conventionalised pre-packaged routine developing (cf. 4.4.1.2).

Personal discussions with German NS regarding their interpretation of “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” when employed by learners to reoffer reveal that the reaction of German NS upon hearing this utterance amounts to puzzlement. The utterance may be interpreted to ridicule the refuser by insinuating either that the offerer does not believe the refuser or that the refuser does not know his own mind. In either case, the refuser is insulted. The reason is clear: the utterance is interpreted as an ad hoc formulation rather than as a harmless pragmatic routine.

Development issues

Development over time towards the L2-norm in learners’ reoffering behaviour is not initially obvious from Table 18. Indeed, on first glance it appears that learners’ employment of “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” has actually increased over time in a movement away from the L2 norm. In the accident, work experience and lift situations, for example, employment of this pragmatic routine increases from L(1) to L(3). In the remaining three situations — the beverage, bag and maths situations — the trend is the opposite, i.e., towards the L2 norm, as the levels of “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” decrease over time. However, even in these three situations, levels of this routine first increased in L(2) over the L(1) level before dropping in L(3) to below the L(1).

To interpret the increases and decreases recorded in learners’ use of “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” over time, it is necessary to look at the changes seen here in terms of the considerable drop in reoffering recorded in all situations with the exception of the work experience situation in the learner data over time (cf.

Table 18. Frequency of “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*”/“Are you sure?” in offer/refusal situations with exchange structure Initiate–*n*(Contra)–Satisfy, *n* > 1 — Developmental focus^a

		Accident	Beverage	Work exp.	Lift	Bag	Maths
L(1)	<i>n</i> > 1	83.3	50	18.7	30.3	66.7	41.9
	% “sure?”/“sicher?”	57.7	14.3	–	40	59.1	15.4
L(2)	<i>n</i> > 1	53.3	17.2	20.7	9.4	31.2	37.5
	% “sure?”/“sicher?”	66.7	60	–	33.3	70	33.3
L(3)	<i>n</i> > 1	54.8	7.1	18.2	13.3	30.3	12.1
	% “sure?”/“sicher?”	83.4	–	16.7	75	50	–
German NS	<i>n</i> > 1	35.5	8.8	3	5.9	14.7	17.6
	% “sure?”/“sicher?”	40	–	–	–	–	–
IrEng NS	<i>n</i> > 1	61.5	70.4	15.4	59.3	77.8	55.6
	% “sure?”	62.5	57.9	100	70.6	71.4	60

I = Initiate, C = Contra, Sa = Satisfy
^a All values are expressed in percentages.

Table 18 and also 5.1). With these changes in mind, it is clear that the percentages given here for use of “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” in L(3) refer to a much smaller number than in L(1). In other words, use of “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” as a realisation of a reoffer decreases substantially over time spent in the target speech community primarily as a result of a number of offer-refusal exchange structures of the form Initiate– n (Contra)–Satisfy, where $n > 1$. However, where a reoffer occurs in the learner data in L(3), these learners, rather than increasingly employing the German NS strategy of employing ad hoc formulations to realise it, actually increase their dependency on the form “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” over time in the accident, work experience and lift situations. This points to a greater learner dependency in the use of pragmatic routines.

Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?

Transfer — Initial analysis

A glance at Figure 4 clearly shows that the differences recorded in the realisations of reoffers in the German NS and learner L(1) data can be traced to pragmatic transfer from the L1, Irish English (cf. also Table 18). We see that the pragmatic routine “Are you sure?” is not restricted to any particular situational constellation in Irish English but is, rather, the preferred form of reoffer where offer-refusal exchanges are of the form Initiate– n (Contra)–Satisfy where $n > 1$ in all six situations under analysis.

The pragmatic routine “Are you sure?” or a shortened version, “Sure?”, and to a lesser extent “Are you positive?”/“Positive?”, are the most common realisations of this reoffering strategy. A further variant is the pragmatic routine “If you’re sure?”, often prefaced by a starter, as seen in the following examples taken from the IrEng NS data in this study:

(45) Bag, E1F:

- You:* You look weighed down there, would you like some help?
Girl: No thank you. My friend Loretto will be here shortly and she will help me.
You: Well, if you’re sure?
Girl: I am. Thanks.
You: Good bye
Girl: Bye

(46) Beverage, E4F:

- You:* Would you like to come in and have a cup of tea. They should be back in an hour or two?
Uncle: Thank you very much but I can’t, I’m due back in the office. I was down here on business so I decided to call in.
You: Are you sure?
Uncle: Positive. I’ll see you again ...

So conventional have the routine “Are you sure?” and indeed variants of this routine become in Irish English that they have, to a large extent, lost their semantic meaning. Their functionality lies in the fulfilment of the sincerity condition for offers. In other words, whether a particular offer is going to be accepted or rejected is not the main issue. Convention dictates that the offer be realised over two turns. Clearly, learners’ employment of “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*”, as it is employed in examples (40) and (41), has the status of a pragmatic routine just as in their L1. Its use leaves learners open to potential pragmatic failure.

Relative to the IrEng NS data, learners’ levels of use of this pragmatic routine in L(1) are lower in all situations, and situational differences are evident — relatively large differences being found in the work experience and maths situations.

Transfer — Development issues

The same difficulties experienced in the comparison of the L(1) and L(3) data are experienced in the comparison of IrEng NS levels with learner levels — the number of reoffers in L(3) being much lower than that in L(1) and in the IrEng NS data. Nevertheless, the mere fact that the number of reoffers has decreased over time, means transfer of ritual reoffers of the form “Are you sure?” has decreased. As regards situational variation, Table 18 shows that there is some decrease in transfer in the beverage, bag and maths situations, whereas in the lift and accident situations, use of “Are you sure?” to realise a reoffer soars towards the L1 level — surpassing it slightly in the lift situation and considerably in the accident situation.

5.2.2 Cases of partial equivalence

In the following, three levels of partial equivalence of pragmatic routines across cultures are distinguished, namely differences of semantic content (cf. 5.2.2.1), differences of illocutionary potential (cf. 5.2.2.2) and differences in situations of use (cf. 5.2.2.3). Each of these levels of difference is found to hold potential for learner development over time spent in the target speech community. Let us turn firstly to differences of semantic content.

5.2.2.1 *Differences of semantic content*

Routines which share a similar communicative function but display semantic variation in the L1 and L2 have been suggested by Davies (1987:81) to be for the most part unproblematic for learners due to their easy learnability. However, instances of their problematic nature have been noted by Günthner (1992:1), who reports of Chinese speakers of English transferring the semantic content of the Chinese greeting “Have you already eaten?” into English where it appears to have the status of a pre-sequence to an invitation.

Learner difficulties with routines which are similar in communicative function but which differ semantically in the L1 and L2 are also found in the present learner data. The first pragmatic routine of this nature investigated is “*Ich wollte fragen, ob ...*” (I wanted to ask if/whether ...) or the alternative form “*Eine Frage: ...*” (One question: ...) — both forms of which are used by German NS to focus an interlocutor’s attention on an upcoming request. The explicit content-orientation (relates to a “question”) of these routines is absent in a pragmatic routine with similar illocutionary force employed frequently in English, namely the routine “I wonder could you ...” or “I wonder if you ...”.

Further pragmatic routines which are relevant in this context are those employed to realise a refusal by letting one’s interlocutor “off the hook” by relieving him/her of any obligation to help (cf. Beebe et al. 1990, cf. also Appendix 10.1). One such case in point is the German routine “*Es geht schon*”, the pragmatic routine with the overall highest level of employment in the present German NS data in the situations under analysis. This pragmatic routine, despite having the same communicative function as many off-the-hook pragmatic routines employed in English, does not have the same semantic content.

Let us turn first to the pragmatic routines used in requesting:

a. “*Ich wollte fragen, ob ...*” (I wanted to ask if/whether ...)

Is there evidence of changes in learners’ L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the target speech community?

Initial analysis

A glance at Table 19 reveals that the pragmatic routine “*Ich wollte fragen, ob Du/Sie ...*” (I wanted to ask if/whether you ...), or a variation of it, “*Eine Frage: ...*” (One question: ...), is employed by the present Irish learners only in two situations

Table 19. Frequency of “*Ich wollte fragen, ob ...*”/“I wanted to ask if/whether ...”/“*Eine Frage: ...*”/“One question: ...” by request situation — Developmental focus^a

	Kitchen	Telephone	Notes	Drive	Application	Police	Grammar	Presentation
L(1)	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	6.1
L(2)	—	3	6.1	3	—	—	—	6
L(3)	—	3	9.1	11.1	—	—	3	27.3
German NS	—	—	3.3	3.3	20	—	10	20
IrEng NS	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

^a All values are expressed in percentages.

in L(1) — in the notes and presentation situations — in both cases to a very low level. In contrast to the Irish learner data in L(1), this routine is employed in five of the present eight request situations by German NS, highest employment being with requests in the application and presentation situations. Although in the notes situation, the L(1) and German NS levels are approximately equally low, the German NS level is considerably higher in the presentation situation.

An example of this pragmatic routine as used by the German NS in this corpus in its function in directing an interlocutor's attention to an oncoming request from the present dataset is:

(47) Application form, G8F:

Ich bin an einem Sommerjob sehr interessiert und wollte fragen, ob Sie mir ein Bewerbungsformular zuschicken können?

(Application form, G8F (translation): I am very interested in a summer job and wanted to ask if you can send me an application form?)

Development issues

With time in the target speech community, learners' use of the content-oriented pragmatic routine "*Ich wollte fragen, ob...*"/"*Eine Frage...*" (I wanted to ask if/whether .../One question: ...) becomes more L2-like. In the third dataset, the levels of use of this routine have increased towards the German NS norm. As can be seen in Table 19, the second learner dataset shows a very slight movement towards the German NS data, with the routine occurring in four situations rather than in just the two situations in which it had appeared in L(1). However, the levels of occurrence remain limited. The increase towards German NS levels is more obvious in the third learner dataset (L(3)). Overall, this routine is found in five of the eight request situations — the same number as in the German NS data.

However, despite an increase in the frequency of use of this pragmatic routine, learners' use of it does not necessarily reflect German NS use on a sociopragmatic level. Indeed, learners' employment of the pragmatic routine in the presentation situation actually surpasses German NS use in the same situation as is also the case in the drive and notes situations; learners' use of this routine in these situations points to a trend towards sociopragmatic overgeneralisation. In addition, learners' use of this routine in such situations as the application and grammar situations, in which German NS employment is relatively high, is not comparable. The relatively high level of use in the German NS data for the application situation contrasts with no incidence of its use in all three learner datasets.

Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?

Transfer — Initial analysis

The paucity of the present pragmatic routines in the learner data in L(1) can be explained with reference to the IrEng NS data, since, as seen from Table 19, this pragmatic routine is not used in any of the eight request situations under analysis in Irish English. Although this data does not imply that such utterances as “I (just) wanted to ask if...” are not found in Irish English, the findings do point to a tendency for German NS to differ from IrEng NS in their choice of pragmatic routine in focusing their interlocutor’s attention on a particular request. Whereas the German NS prefer pragmatic routines which focus on content in such situations, i.e., on the question to be asked (“*Eine Frage: ...*” or “*Ich wollte fragen, ob ...*”), IrEng NS exhibit a preference for routines of the form “I wonder could you...” or “I wonder if you could...” Although here the illocutionary force is shared by both “I wonder could you...” and “*Ich wollte fragen, ob ...*”, the semantic content of the routines differs. Examples from the present Irish English NS dataset include:

- (48) Telephone, E14F:
Excuse me but I was wondering do you have a twenty for these two tens, please.
- (49) Application form, E9F:
I was wondering if you could send me out an application form.

The absence of content-oriented pragmatic routines from learner discourse will not, it is believed, cause pragmatic failure in the L2, but there is no doubt that learners’ adoption of such routines facilitates the attainment of communicative goals. Furthermore, transfer of the semantic content of the English pragmatic routine “I wonder if you...” into German (“*Ich wundere mich, ob Sie ...*”) will cause pragmatic failure as the verb “*sich wundern*” is only used in German to mean “to be surprised” (Collins 1991:771); a direct translation will consequently make no sense. Incidents of such direct transfer do occur in the first two learner datasets, although only in individual cases. Examples include:

- (50) Notes, A18F:
Hallo Judith, ich wundere mich, ob du mich deine Aufzeichnungen ausleihen könnte ...
(Notes, A18F (translation): Hallo Judith, I am surprised (I wonder), if you could lend me your notes ...)
- (51) Drive, A11F:
Entschuldigung sie bitte, ... ich wundere mich, ob es möglich sein würde, ich mit ihnen zurück nach Hause fahren könnte?
(Drive, A11F (translation): Excuse me please ... I am surprised (I wonder), if it would be possible, if I could go back home with you?)

Transfer — Development issues

The decreases in learners’ use of the pragmatic routine “I was wondering...”, stemming from Irish English, and the gradual increase from L(2) to L(3) in their use of the pragmatic routine “*Ich wollte fragen, ob...*” (I wanted to ask if/whether ...) represent a decrease in negative transfer from learners’ L1.

b. Off-the-hook refusal strategies

An “off-the-hook” strategy is a semantic strategy employed as a means of realising a refusal (cf. Beebe et al. 1990) (cf. Appendix 10.1). By underlining that the particular problem or need which the offerer has seen and acted on does not exist, the refuser deems a particular act unnecessary and in so doing attempts to persuade the offerer in question not to carry out the particular act s/he has proposed. This section concentrates on learners’ realisations of this popular refusal strategy by means of ad hoc utterances and pragmatic routines. We look, in particular, at one specific pragmatic routine, namely “*Es geht schon*”, which like the pragmatic routine “I’m all right” in English, realises an off-the-hook strategy. Despite sharing the same function, the semantic content of both of these routines differs, causing difficulties for learners. The analysis starts with a look at learners’ overall employment of off-the-hook strategies in the present offer/refusal data.

Is there evidence of changes in learners’ L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the target speech community?

Initial analysis

Table 20 shows that the general refusal strategy, off-the-hook, is present in the Irish learner data from L(1) through to L(3) as it is in the German NS data. Also the situation-dependency of this strategy is similar in the German NS and learner data

Table 20. Frequency of off-the-hook strategies in initial refusals — Developmental focus^a

	Accident	Beverage	Work exp.	Lift	Bag	Maths
L(1)	42.4	—	18.7	12.1	93.3	9.7
L(2)	56.2	—	25	—	90	9.4
L(3)	39.4	3.3	21.2	—	93.7	15.2
German NS	73.5	17.6	12.1	20.6	93.5	26.5

^a All values are expressed in percentages.

Table 21. Accident situation: Frequency of pragmatic routines/ad hoc formulae in off-the-hook strategies over initial and first subsequent refusals — Developmental focus^a

Pragmatic routines	L(1)	L(2)	L(3)	German NS
<i>Es geht schon</i> (It's all right)	3.6	7.8	11.1	16.4
<i>Nicht nötig</i> (No need)	7.1	13.7	7.9	21.8
<i>Ist okay/in Ordnung</i> (It's okay)	10.7	9.8	9.5	10.9
<i>Nichts passiert</i> (No problem)	—	—	—	9.1
<i>Keine Sorge</i> (No worries / Don't worry)	3.6	2	7.9	1.8
Other pragmatic routines (e.g., <i>Alles klar</i> (It's okay), <i>Macht nichts</i> (It doesn't matter), <i>Nicht wichtig</i> (It doesn't matter), <i>Lohnt sich nicht</i> (It's not worth it), <i>Kein Grund</i> (It's not necessary), <i>Komme klar</i> (I can manage), <i>Nicht schlimm</i> (Don't worry), <i>Kein Problem</i> (No problem), <i>Keine Angst</i> (No worries))	9	11.8	8	1.8
Learner-specific routines (<i>Kein Bedarf</i> , <i>Es ist klar</i> , <i>Alles gut</i>)	1.8	4	—	—
Total pragmatic routines	35.8	49.1	44.4	61.8
Ad hoc off-the-hook realisations				
<i>Ich fühle mich wohl/Mir geht's gut/Ich bin in Ordnung</i> ^b / <i>Ich bin nicht verletzt</i> (I feel well, I'm fine, I'm not injured)	62.5	47	54	34.5
Other (<i>Ich brauche Sie nicht</i> , <i>Ich kann selbst ...</i>) (I don't need you, I can do ... myself)	1.8	3.9	1.6	3.6
Total ad hoc realisations	64.3	50.9	55.6	38.1

^a All values are expressed in percentages.

^b Although some of the utterances categorised in this section as ad hoc, such as "*Ich fühle mich wohl*", "*Mir geht's gut*" and "*Ich bin in Ordnung*", are themselves pragmatic routines, they are not pragmatic routines with the illocutionary force to realise an off-the-hook strategy irrespective of context. Rather, they are routines which are used conventionally to respond to a question as to how one is feeling.

from L(1) to L(3) — being employed extensively in initial refusals in the bag and accident situations in all datasets. In the remaining situations, use of this semantic strategy is low in both the German NS and learner data in L(1) through to L(3). Consequently, the following investigation of the linguistic realisations of this off-the-hook strategy focuses exclusively on the bag and accident situations.

As can be seen from Table 21 and Table 22, which show the actual realisations of the off-the-hook strategies employed by learners over time and also by German NS in the accident and bag situations, there are two main ways of realising this semantic strategy: via an ad hoc formulation or a pragmatic routine. In both the accident and bag situations, the German NS reveal a preference for pragmatic

Table 22. Bag situation: Frequency of pragmatic routines/ad hoc formulae in off-the-hook strategies over initial and first subsequent refusals — Developmental focus^a

Pragmatic routines	L(1)	L(2)	L(3)	German NS
<i>Es geht schon</i> (It's all right)	22.2	15.4	44.4	48.3
<i>Ich schaffe das schon</i> (I'll manage all right)	7.4	3.8	11.1	41.4
<i>Ist okay/in Ordnung</i> (It's okay)	14.8	11.5	5.5	
Other pragmatic routines (<i>Keine Sorgen</i> (No worries / Don't worry), <i>Unter Kontrolle</i> (It's all under control), <i>Paßt schon</i> (It's okay), <i>Kein Problem</i> (No problem), <i>Laß mal</i> (It's okay))	—	11.4		6.8
Learner-specific pragmatic routines (<i>Mir ist egal</i> / <i>Es ist mir egal</i> , <i>Ich werde/bin gut</i> , <i>bin zufrieden</i> , <i>bin zu recht</i>)	18.5	11.4	11	—
Total pragmatic routines	62.9	53.5	72	96.5
Ad hoc off-the-hook realisations				
<i>Nicht schwer</i>	3.7	15.4	5.5	—
<i>Ich brauche Sie nicht/habe keine Probleme/mache es alleine/brauche keine Hilfe</i> (I don't need you, I don't have any problems, I'll do it myself/I don't need any help)	11.1	19.2	—	—
<i>Ich kann x tragen/tun</i> (I can carry/do x)	7.4	7.7	16.7	3.4
<i>Ich kann es schaffen</i> (I can manage it) ^b	14.8	3.8	5.5	—
Total ad hoc realisations	37	46.1	27.7	3.4

^a All values are expressed in percentages.
^b Although “I can manage it” is a pragmatic routine in Irish English, its direct translation, “*Ich kann es schaffen*”, does not have this status in German; instead “*Ich schaffe es schon*” (I'll manage it all right) would be an equivalent pragmatic routine.

routines — this preference being higher in the accident situation than the bag situation. The learners, on the other hand, tend to use more ad hoc strategies than the German NS in both situations.

This learner tendency towards ad hoc formulations, however, encompasses some potential for pragmatic failure. This is seen in the use of some of the ad hoc realisations employed by learners, as the following example illustrates:

- (52) Bag, A10F:
You: *Vielleicht könnte ich Ihnen helfen ...*
Girl: *Danke aber ich brauche keine Hilfe. Ich kann es alleine schaffen.*
(Bag, A10F, (translation):
You: *Maybe I could help you ...*
Girl: *Thanks but I don't need any help. I can manage on my own)*

It is noteworthy that although such ad hoc realisations of the form “*Ich brauche Sie nicht*”, “*Ich habe keine Probleme*”, etc. (I don’t need you, I don’t have any problems) are employed by learners in the bag situation in L(1) and L(2), they are not employed by any German NS in this same situation. This is explained by the fact that such realisations appear “*zu direkt und hart*” (too direct and harsh) in this particular situation as one German NS asked to comment on this response remarked. Their use can, thus, be said to represent an instance of potential pragmatic failure.

Before turning to the pragmatic routine “*Es geht schon*” it is perhaps worth briefly mentioning that even those pragmatic routines which learners do employ are not always L2-like. Let me illustrate this point with a brief discussion of one of these learner-specific routines, “*Mir ist egal*” or “*Es ist mir egal*” (cf. Table 21 and Table 22). This routine is employed by only two learners in all three learner datasets, i.e., by A27F and, in particular, C2M. The following example illustrates its use:

(53) Bag, C2M:

Du: Entschuldigen Sie, brauchen Sie hilfe?

Frau: Nein Danke, mir ist egal.

Du: Sind Sie sicher ...

(Bag, C2M (translation):

You: Excuse me, do you need help?

Girl: No thanks, I don’t care (it doesn’t matter)

You: Are you sure ...)

These learners, in using “*Es ist mir egal*” and “*Mir ist egal*” (an inappropriate learner-version of “*Mir ist’s egal*”), can be suggested to be confusing “*Es ist mir egal*” with “*Es ist egal*”, the former which can be translated as “I don’t care”, the latter as “it doesn’t matter”. Although use of the latter routine, despite not being employed by German NS to realise an off-the-hook strategy in the present data, may make sense in the context, use of “*Es ist mir egal*” or “*Mir ist egal*”, the learners’ variation on this, does not. “*Es ist mir egal*” is, rather, employed in a situation where someone wishes to convey that s/he has no particular preference in a particular matter. In the L(1) data in the offer/refusal situations under analysis, this particular routine occurs three times, used twice by learner C2M and once by A27F.

“*Es geht schon*”, as seen in Table 21 and Table 22, is the pragmatic routine most frequently employed in the German NS data in the bag situation and the second most frequently employed routine in the accident situation in the same dataset. Learners’ use of this pragmatic routine in L(1) is considerably lower than these German levels in both situations.

Development issues

Over time in the target speech community, some development is recorded in the learner data as regards the linguistic realisation of those off-the-hook strategies

employed by learners. The number of routines employed by learners to realise an off-the-hook strategy in both the accident and bag situations namely increases towards the L2 norm. Logically, this increase was accompanied by a decrease, also towards the L2 norm, in the use of ad hoc strategies (cf. Table 21, Table 22).

Further L2-like developments were recorded in the decrease recorded from L(1) to L(2) in the use of the learner-specific off-the-hook pragmatic routine “*Es ist mir egal*”. In L(2), only one informant, C2M, continues to employ this routine inappropriately in both the bag and accident situations. In L(3), however, he has also stopped using the routine.

Over the study abroad period, learners’ use of “*Es geht schon*” also underwent an L2-like increase to approximately approach the norm in both the accident and bag situations in L(3). This is clearly illustrated in Figure 5 (cf. also Table A13–3, Appendix 13).

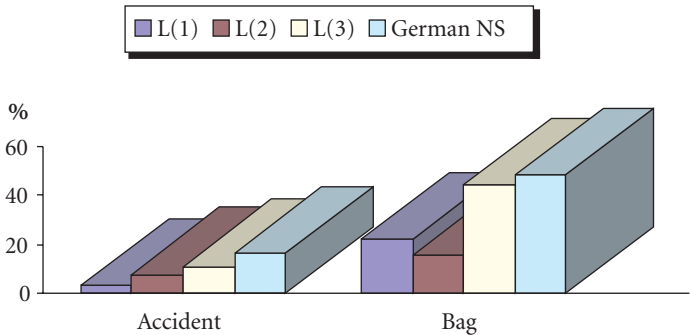


Figure 5. Frequency of “*Es geht*” in off-the-hook strategies over initial and first subsequent refusals — Developmental focus.

In contrast, despite scope for further movement towards the German NS norm in the use of other pragmatic routines, such as “*Ich schaffe das schon*” (I’ll manage all right) in the bag situation and “*Nicht nötig*” (No need) in the accident situation, no such development towards the L2 norm was recorded in these cases (cf. Table 21 and Table 22).

5.2.2.2 Differences of illocutionary potential

In this section, the focus is on routines which are semantically similar across the particular cultures in question but which differ in the range of functions carried out. Examples include “*Danke*” in German and “Thank you” in English. Although semantically these pragmatic routines are equivalent, “*Danke*” can signal refusal in response to an offer, whereas “Thank you” in the same situation would signal acceptance (cf. Lovik 1987:41, Schmidt/Richards 1980: 147).⁸

“No problem” is an example of such a pragmatic routine in the learner data of the present study. “No problem” is similar in illocutionary force to the semantically equivalent “*Kein Problem*” in German on a number of levels (cf. 5.2.3 for examples). However, although “No problem” can function as a Minimize in Irish English in response to expressions of gratitude which partly realise a refusal of an offer, “*Kein Problem*” cannot do the same in German. Rather, the use of “*Kein Problem*” as a Minimize in such situations leads to potential confusion among NS of German. A Minimize is understood here as an element employed in response to thanks in order to downplay the social benefits bestowed on the speaker by virtue of the thanks received (cf. Edmondson/House 1981: 166). Such Minimizes are found in the present offer/refusal data, since refusing an offer potentially threatens the face of the offerer in question, leading the refuser to attempt to build up the offerer’s face by either explicitly or implicitly thanking him/her (cf. 4.3.3). In response to this expression of thanks, the offerer, as the recipient of a social benefit, is then obliged to minimise the thanks in order to “underplay or suppress his own benefits” and also to thank his interlocutor for “bestowing social prestige” on him/her (cf. Edmondson/House 1981: 166).

Is there evidence of changes in learners’ L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the target speech community?

Initial analysis

Prior to the year abroad, the present Irish learners employ the pragmatic routine “*Kein Problem*” as a Minimize in three of the five offer/refusal situations under analysis, the accident and maths situations being the exceptions. As can be seen in Figure 6, employment is, however, rather low in all situations as a percentage of the

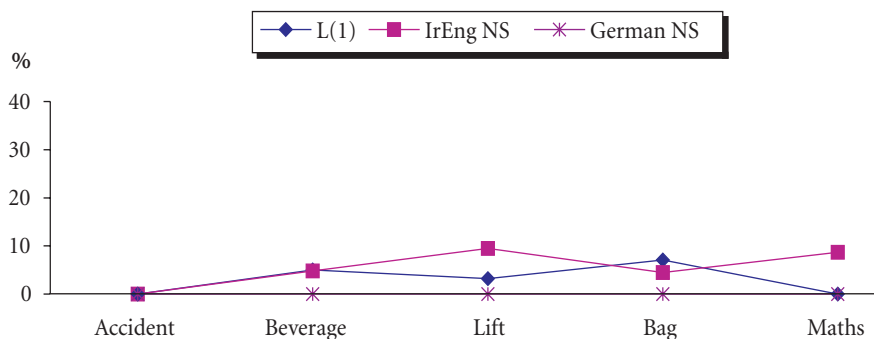


Figure 6. Frequency of “*Kein Problem*”/“No problem” as a Minimize by offer/refusal situation.

total number of Minimizes included in the elicited dialogues (cf. Table A13–4, Appendix 13).⁹

Examples of the present Irish learners' use of "Kein Problem" in German to minimise an expression of thanks forming part of a refusal of an offer include:

(54) Bag, A9F:

Du: *Hallo, möchten Sie ein bißchen Hilfe?*

Junge Frau: *Nein danke.*

Du: *Bist du sicher, deine Koffern siehst so schwer aus.*

Junge Frau: *Nein, alles ist in Ordnung, mein Vater kommt gleich. Danke schön*

Du: *Kein Problem. Schöne Reise noch. Tschüß.*

(Bag, A9F (translation):

You: Hi, would you like a little help?

Girl: No thanks.

You: Are you sure, your cases look so heavy.

Girl: No, it's okay, my father is coming any minute. Thanks

You: No problem. Have a nice journey. Bye).

(55) Bag, A21F:

Du: *Hallo, ich habe bemerkt wie du solche große Koffern hast. Kann ich dir damit helfen?*

Junge Frau: *Das ist sehr nett von dir aber meinen Freund kommt nach einige Minuten und er kann mich helfen.*

Du: *Ok, kein Problem.*

(Bag, A21F (translation):

You: Hi, I noticed you've such big cases. Can I help you with them?

Girl: That's very kind of you but my boyfriend is coming in a few minutes and he can help me.

You: OK, no problem.)

In contrast, the present German NS did not employ this routine as a Minimize in any offer/refusal of offer situation in the present dataset. Rather than "Kein Problem", they employed pragmatic routines, such as "(Na)/(Also) gut", "Dann eben nicht", "Wie Sie meinen", "Tja", "Okay (dann)", "Wie Du willst", "Ach so", "Na dann...", "Ja, dann...", "Alles klar" and "Keine Ursache" as a Minimize. Indeed, not only is the pragmatic routine "Kein Problem" not employed as a Minimize in such situations by German NS, but its use may also actually lead to potential pragmatic failure. This is suggested not only from the absence of this pragmatic routine as a Minimize in the present German NS data but also following discussions held with a number of NS of German in both Hamburg and Bonn and with two separate classes of approximately twenty-five students of predominantly German NS students from the University of Bonn between December 1998 and May 1999. These informants were asked to comment on a dialogue which included "Kein Problem" as a Minimize appearing after an expression of gratitude as part of a refusal of an offer. The

conclusion was that “*Kein Problem*”, rather than serving to maintain social relationships, actually causes confusion, as it is interpreted in either of two following ways: (a) It may be understood as an ironic comment, signalling that the offerer is insulted that his/her interlocutor has refused the offer, i.e., that the refusal is in fact a “problem”, or (b) it may be assumed that the offerer did not mean the offer at all, i.e., that s/he is pleased that his/her offer was refused, as there is now no need to carry out the future act.

Development issues

The analysis of the five offer/refusal situations reveals that learners’ employment of “*Kein Problem*” as a Minimize, rather than decreasing towards the L2 norm, increases in four of the five situations investigated, moving away from the German NS norm of 0% (cf. Table 23, Figure A13–1, Appendix 13). Only in the accident situation does the routine continue not to be used. Behind the backdrop of an approximately stable number of total Minimizes, very clear increases are found in the bag and lift situations, in particular.

Table 23. Frequency of “*Kein Problem*”/“No problem” as a Minimize by offer/refusal situation — Developmental focus

		Accident	Beverage	Lift	Bag	Maths
L(1)	% Minimizes	76.7	69	93.9	84.8	74.2
	% “No problem” / “ <i>Kein Problem</i> ”	–	5	3.2	7.1	–
L(2)	% Minimizes	82.8	72.4	81.8	68.7	62.5
	% “No problem” / “ <i>Kein Problem</i> ”	4.2	–	14.8	18.2	15
L(3)	% Minimizes	61.3	85.7	83.9	84.8	60.6
	% “No problem” / “ <i>Kein Problem</i> ”	–	8.3	23.1	28.6	10
IrEng NS	% Minimizes	73.1	77.8	77.8	81.5	85.2
	% “No problem”	–	4.8	9.5	4.5	8.7

Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?

Transfer — Initial analysis

In contrast to the German NS data where “*Kein Problem*” does not appear at all, “no problem” is employed as a Minimize in four of the five offer/refusals situations in the present IrEng NS corpus, the accident situation representing an exception (cf. Figure 6 and Table 23). This usage can be seen from the following IrEng NS example drawn from the present database:

(56) Bag, E10F:

You: Can I give you a hand?

Girl: No thanks, I'll manage.

You: Are you sure? I'm going that way anyhow and my luggage isn't too heavy.

Girl: No, no I'm fine. Thank you. My boyfriend is gone to the toilet. He'll be back in a second. Thanks again.

You: OK. No problem

Consequently, it may be suggested that negative transfer explains why the present learners employ the pragmatic routine “*Kein Problem*” as a Minimize in three of the five offer/refusal situations under analysis prior to the year abroad. Similar to the learner data in L(1), the employment levels are not particularly high in any situation.

Transfer — Development issues

Ideally, learners' use of the pragmatic routine “No problem” to realise a Minimize in offer/refusal of offer situations would have decreased over time spent abroad in the light of possible misunderstandings. However, instead the learners engage increasingly in negative pragmalinguistic transfer with time to such an extent that they employ this pragmatic routine in the lift and bag situations to a higher extent in L(2) and L(3) than even the L1 speakers (cf. Table 23).

5.2.2.3 Differences in situations of use

Some pragmatic routines, although equivalent in semantic content and illocutionary force in two languages, may differ from each other on the level of the particular limitations related to the use of the routine in either the L1 or L2. Here situational variables are of relevance. Wildner-Bassett (1984:35), writing on pragmatic routines, comments on the importance of obeying such sociolinguistic rules, stating that:

... if the learner chooses to become, in some way, a member of the community which has reached these ‘tacit agreements’, he must practice the specific sociolinguistic rule appropriate to the speech situation. He must not only accomplish the goal of the interactional act, but must also do so in a way that follows the rules of the specific community.

Mastery of such rules relating to pragmatic routines has, however, been suggested to represent a difficult goal for learners, since the culture-bound nature of routines means that the relevant rules of use often differ across speech communities (cf. Aijmer 1996: 30). An example of a pragmatic routine which, although equivalent in illocutionary force and semantic content, differs in the context in which it should be employed is the Japanese formula for “*Guten Appetit*” or “*Bon appétit*”. Unlike

the German or French form, this pragmatic routine cannot be employed by the one who provides the meal (cf. Coulmas 1979: 259).

The following analysis concentrates on the German pragmatic routine, “*Das ist (aber) nett (von Dir/Ihnen)*” and its Irish English semantic equivalent “(Oh), that’s kind of you”. Variations of these routines which appear in the present NS corpora are “That’s (very) kind/nice/good of you (to offer)” and “*Das ist (aber) nett/lieb/liebenswürdig/freundlich (von Dir/Ihnen)*”. Illocutionary force is also shared by these routines. As is seen in the following examples, these pragmatic routines occur in the present German NS and IrEng NS database in realisations of refusals of offers. The occurrence of these pragmatic routines in realisations of this speech act can be explained with reference to the face-threatening nature of refusals of offers. The implicit face-threat to the hearer necessitates some mitigation of the force of the illocution, often in the form of an expression of thanks, since, after all, the refuser has received a “social ... benefit” from the offerer (Edmondson/House 1981: 163), which he then refuses.

- (57) Work experience, E4F:

You: ... I’d be willing to give him grinds [Irish English for private, after-school tuition]

New boss: That’s very nice of you to offer but I don’t agree with grinds. He needs to work himself ...

- (58) Lift, G1F:

Professor: *Wohnen Sie nicht auch in Winterhude? Sie wohnen doch gleich da bei mir ums Eck. Sie können bei mir mitfahren.*

Du: *Nein, nein, danke. Das ist sehr nett. Aber wir sind mit dem Fahrrad.*

(Lift, G1F (translation):

Professor: Do you not live in Winterhude too? But you live just around the corner from me. I can give you a lift.

You: No, no, thanks. That’s very kind. But we’re on our bikes)

In the present analysis, learners’ use of the pragmatic routine “*Das ist (aber) nett (von Dir/Ihnen)*” and its variations is examined over initial and first subsequent refusals relative to the frequency with which simple expressions of thanks, such as “*Danke*” and “*Vielen Dank*”, are used.

Is there evidence of changes in learners’ L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the target speech community?

Initial analysis

The present learners use the pragmatic routine “*Das ist (aber) nett (von Dir/Ihnen)*” in five of the six offer/refusal situations under analysis prior to their year abroad, the

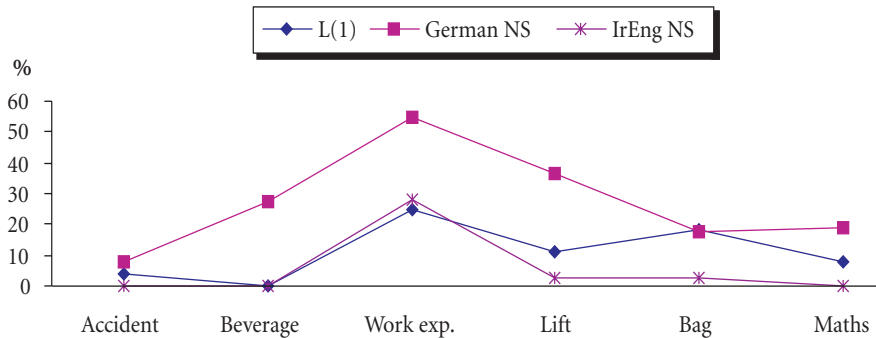


Figure 7. Frequency of “*Das ist nett/lieb/liebenswürdig/freundlich*”/“That’s kind/nice/good of you” in gratitude strategies over initial and first subsequent refusals.

exception being the beverage situation. However, employment levels in each situation are rather low, with the highest level found in the work experience situation (cf. Figure 7, Table A13–5, Appendix 13).

As in the learner data, this particular pragmatic routine also enjoys a wide application in the German NS data, appearing in all six situations under analysis. Situational variation is also evident, with most expressions of gratitude taking this form in the work experience situation — similar to the case in the learner data in L(1). The higher overall levels of application in the German NS data, however, contrast with those found in the learner data.

Development issues

With time spent in the second language context, learners’ initially low levels of employment relative to the German NS norm change and at the end of their stay learners employ this pragmatic routine to a greater extent than in L(1) in three situations, i.e., in the lift, work experience and maths situations (cf. Figure 8, Table A13–5, Appendix 13). Whereas the increase is gradual in the maths and lift situations, it is not recorded until L(3) in the work experience situation. In the remaining situations, levels remain approximately stable. In L(3), levels of employment in the work experience and lift situations have come closer to the L2 norm — reaching the norm in the lift situation. In the maths situation, however, German NS levels are somewhat exceeded. Also noteworthy is the complete lack of employment of this routine in the beverage situation in L(3) in contrast to the German NS data.

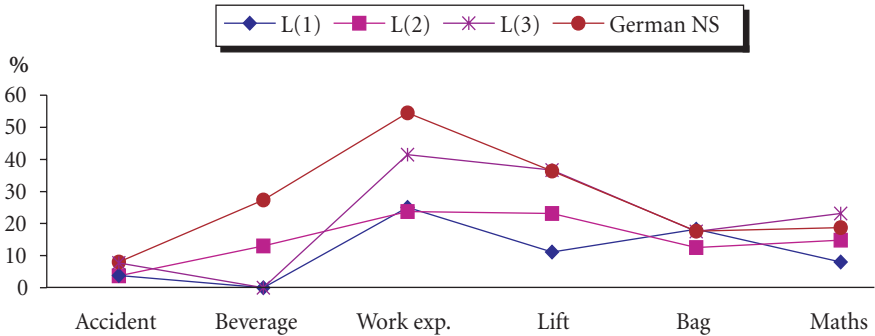


Figure 8. Frequency of “*Das ist nett/lieb/liebenswürdig/freundlich*” (That’s kind/nice/good of you) in gratitude strategies over initial and first subsequent refusals — Developmental focus.

Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?

Transfer — Initial analysis

Use of “*Das ist (aber) nett (von Dir/Ihnen)*” by the Irish learners of German prior to their year abroad is clearly a product of pragmatic transfer from Irish English. Transfer is positive insofar as the routine occurs at all in the L(1) data and also insofar as the relatively high level of employment of the pragmatic routine in the work experience situation — similar to the German NS dataset — appears to stem from the fact that employment is also highest in this situation in the IrEng NS data. However, negative transfer from Irish English is also obvious in learners’ realisations when the overall relatively low levels of employment are taken into account. It is clearly seen from Figure 7 that the IrEng NS data, similar to the learner data in L(1), reflects a rather limited level of employment of “(Oh), that’s kind of you” and variations of same (cf. also Table A13–5, Appendix 13). Indeed, this pragmatic routine only appears to any considerable extent in the most formal of all the situations in the present analysis where an expression of gratitude is employed, namely in the work experience situation; here the refuser (the new boss) does not know her addressee and is of higher status than the offerer, a student. In all other situations, use of this pragmatic routine is approximately nil. This analysis appears to partly support Edmondson/House’s (1981: 163) analysis with regard to German/English realisations of thanks. They state:

In general, there may be a tendency in German to use Thanking illocutions less readily than is the case in English, and — somewhat paradoxically — to be relatively [formal] in the utterances used. ... For most social contexts, for example, ‘thank you very much’ is probably the most elaborate utterance one would wish to use in English, ... (bracketing in original)

The suggestion concerning a lower frequency of thanking illocutions used in German relative to English cannot be confirmed for Irish English.¹⁰ However, the present data does support the latter insight relating to the relative higher formality of the thanking illocutions employed by German NS. This is clear from the present IrEng NS' preference for simple routines, such as "Thank you", a preference which contrasts with the rather extensive use of "*Das ist (aber) nett (von Dir/Ihnen)*" in all situations in the German NS data. This latter routine can be classified as having a "gushing" force in Irish English.

Transfer — Development issues

Over time in the target speech community, the influence of pragmatic transfer decreases as learners begin to employ "*Das ist (aber) nett (von Dir/Ihnen)*" and variations of this form to a larger extent — all IrEng NS levels were surpassed in L(3). It is also used in a wider number of situations — in five situations in L(3) rather than three in the IrEng NS data.

Linguistic perspective

The final part of the present analysis focuses on the linguistic perspective of "(Oh), that's kind of you" and "*Das ist (aber) nett (von Dir/Ihnen)*". It will be shown in the following that this differs cross-culturally — causing some difficulties for the present learners.

Is there evidence of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the target speech community?

Initial analysis

Some examples of the present Irish learners' use of this routine "*Das ist (aber) nett (von Dir/Ihnen)*" include:

(59) Lift, A16F:

... Du: *Nein, danke. Sie sind sehr nett. Aber ...*

(Lift, A16F (translation): *You: No, thanks. You're very kind. But ...*)

(60) Bag, A16F:

... Frau: *Nein danke. Also das geht. Du bist sehr nett ...*

(Bag, A16F (translation): *Girl: No thanks. I'm okay. You're very kind ...*)

Table 24. Frequency of “*Sie sind nett/lieb/liebenswürdig/freundlich*” (You are very kind/nice/good) in gratitude strategies over initial and first subsequent refusals — Developmental focus

		Accident	Beverage	Work exp.	Lift	Bag	Maths
L(1)	% gratitude	44.6	53.3	70	81.6	70.4	56.8
	% kind/ <i>nett</i>	3.8	—	25	11.1	18.2	8
	% “ <i>Sie sind ...</i> ”	—	—	—	40	25	—
L(2)	% gratitude	57.4	83.3	90.9	88.6	83.3	72.1
	% kind/ <i>nett</i>	3.7	13	23.7	23.1	12.5	14.8
	% “ <i>Sie sind ...</i> ”	—	—	—	—	—	—
L(3)	% gratitude	49	71.9	82	83.8	83.3	64.9
	% kind/ <i>nett</i>	7.7	—	41.5	36.7	15	23.1
	% “ <i>Sie sind ...</i> ”	—	—	—	—	—	—
German NS	% gratitude	57.1	54	82.3	91.7	77.5	37.5
	% kind/ <i>nett</i>	8	27.3	54.5	36.4	17.6	18.7
	% “ <i>Sie sind ...</i> ”	—	—	—	—	—	—

It is noteworthy that in these examples, the hearer is explicitly mentioned. Indeed, we see that this is so in a number of cases in the lift and bag situations as shown in Table 24.

In contrast, in the German NS data, the hearer perspective does not occur in any situation. Instead, these NS prefer an impersonal perspective of the form “*Das ist (sehr) nett*” (That’s (very) kind) when using this routine. There appear to be two possibilities in this regard: Either the hearer is not mentioned explicitly, as in the following work experience example, or s/he is mentioned indirectly, as in the example from the beverage situation:

- (61) Work experience, G28F:
Neue Chefin: Das ist nett, aber er ist nur zu faul ...
 (Work experience, G28F (translation):
New boss: That’s kind, but he’s just too lazy ...)

It may also take the form “*Das ist (sehr) nett von Dir/Ihnen*” (That’s (very) kind of you), as, for instance, in the following example:

- (62) Beverage, G23F:
... Onkel: Das ist lieb von Dir, Danke. Aber eigentlich wollte ich nur kurz ...
 (Beverage, G23F (translation):
Uncle: That’s kind of you, thanks. But actually, I just wanted to ...)

When contrasted with the German NS data, it is suggested that the effect of the learner-specific, hearer-oriented form of this common pragmatic routine is an undesired intimacy which may threaten the hearer's private sphere and, thus, have an unwanted effect.

Development issues

Developments are recorded in the learner data over time spent in the target speech community. Indeed, after L(1), the more direct hearer perspective does not reoccur in any situation in the present data in learners' use of this pragmatic routine. In all cases in L(2) and L(3), either the hearer is not mentioned or s/he is mentioned indirectly via the form "*von Dir/Ihnen*" (of you).

Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?

In English, the pragmatic routine under discussion commonly takes the form "That's (very) kind of you" or "You're very kind", with both forms explicitly addressing the hearer, the latter to a more direct extent. Examples of these forms from the present data include:

- (63) Bag, E23F:
... *Girl*: Ah no thanks, I see my brother now and he'll probably help me with it.
But, thank you anyway. It was kind of you to offer ...
- (64) Lift, E3F:
... *You*: No really you're okay, thank you very much Sir, you're very kind, but
I'm afraid we will have to refuse.

Although the variant "That's (very) kind", i.e., without the hearer being explicitly addressed, is also possible in English, it is less common. No examples are to be found in the present dataset.¹¹ Consequently, it appears that transfer from the L1 decreases over time.

5.2.3 Pragmatic routines — Concluding discussion

Following the developments highlighted above in relation to the present learners' use of pragmatic routines over time spent in the target speech community, the final two research questions guiding the present study are now addressed for the overall study of pragmatic routines.

What implications do any changes or lack of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence have for our understanding of the development of L2 pragmatic competence?

Negative evidence following learner output is proposed to account for some of the decreases in learners' use of non-L2-like routines which were recorded in the present analysis. One example is the decrease in learners' use of the pragmatic routine *"Ich wundere mich, ob..."*, a literal translation of the Irish English pragmatic routine "I was wondering...". Such developments can be explained by the fact that it is to be expected that learners who employed this pragmatic routine met with pragmatic failure, as their illocutionary intent was not recognised, leading to misunderstanding, and, thus, an increase in awareness of the non-L2-like nature of the routine. Further examples include the L2-like developments in the inter-language form taken by a number of pragmatic routines. Prior to the year abroad, the present learners were, for example, shown to experience syntactic problems in their use of the pragmatic routine *"Das ist (sehr) nett von Dir/Ihnen,"* transferring the direct form *"Du bist/Sie sind sehr nett"* (You're very kind) of the equivalent L1 routine into their L2, rather than employing the L2 impersonal form of this pragmatic routine, *"Das ist (aber) nett von Dir/Ihnen"* ((Oh), that's kind of you). It can be suggested that such negative pragmalinguistic transfer also met with strange looks, since the personal form *"Du bist/Sie sind"* is inappropriately intimate to a German NS. Not surprisingly, these L1-like traces had disappeared by L(3). In addition, learners' use of *"Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?"* as a pragmatic routine, similar to the Irish English routine "Are you sure?" decreased over time. As well as being made aware of the absence of this pragmatic routine from the L2 via an awareness of a lack of ritual reoffers in German, it can be suggested that learners who employed this routine to realise a reoffer also met with pragmatic failure, such as that outlined in 1 and in 5.1, whereupon they may have received explicit negative feedback from German NS. Those learners who actually increased their use of this pragmatic routine over time were those who either failed to understand the L2 pragmatic system or who rejected this system in favour of the L1 system.

Secondly, there is no doubt that salient second language input is responsible for the general L2-like increases recorded over time in learners' use of pragmatic

routines. As such, the findings support previous research relating to a positive correlation between a stay in the target speech community and the development of pragmatic routines (cf. 3.3.2.1.2). It seems that learners hear various routines being used and, becoming more familiar with them, include them in their repertoire of routines, recognising their functionality and effectiveness. Over time, learners, via output opportunities, also grow in their ability to access pragmatic routines and their confidence in use increases. Such developments are particularly evident in the increases recorded over time in learners' use of the pragmatic routines "*Ich wollte fragen, ob ...*" (I wanted to ask if/whether ...)/"*Eine Frage: ...*" (One question: ...), "*Das ist (aber) nett (von Dir/Ihnen)*" ((Oh), that's kind of you), "*Kein Problem*"/'No problem' as a Minimize, "*Es geht schon*" (illocutionary force: refusal (off-the-hook strategy)) and in learners' increased preference for pragmatic routines, rather than ad hoc strategies, for realising off-the-hook refusal strategies. Learners' use of the non-L2-like pragmatic routine, "*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*" (Are you sure?) as a pragmatic routine used to realise a reoffer provides further evidence. Although learners' general use of this latter form decreases with time due to a decline in the overall number of reoffers realised by learners, its use among those learners who continue to reoffer increases in a number of situations despite the fact that this form does not have routine status in the learners' L2. This points to learners' knowledge of the usefulness of this routine in their L1 and the desire to transfer it to their L2. The general tendency towards a higher use of pragmatic routines may be welcomed due to the related increase in fluency which it produces and also in relation to the role of pragmatic routines in opening up membership of the particular speech community in question and leading to an increased efficiency in communication (cf. 4.4.1.2). As regards the rate of change, the majority of the changes found in learners' use of pragmatic routines were not recorded until time L(3).

It appears, however, that exposure to appropriate input even in the target speech community and to negative evidence on learner output is not sufficient: frequency of input is also a potentially important factor. While learners' use of the pragmatic routine "*Es geht schon*", for example, increases over time, their use of similar routines, such as "*Ich schaff' das schon*" (I'll manage all right), which serve to realise the same communicative function, does not. It is suggested that the reason may be the more frequent occurrence of "*Es geht schon*" across a wider range of situations relative to other pragmatic routines. In the present data, for example, the routine "*Ich schaff' das schon*" was not employed in the accident situation, whereas "*Es geht schon*" was employed in both the accident and bag situations.

A further difficulty in the acquisition of such L2 pragmatic routines is that while a certain feature of language may appear frequently in the second language input, it may not always be salient or learners may not receive evidence of its inappropriacy in their IL. This issue is illustrated by the case of "*Kein Problem*" in the present data. Here, increases in learners' use of this pragmatic routine as a

Minimize following an expression of gratitude partly realising a refusal of an offer represented a movement away from the target norm and an increase in potential pragmatic failure. This was in contrast to the increases recorded in learners' use of the pragmatic routines, "*Es geht schon*" (illocutionary force: off-the-hook), "*Ich wollte fragen, ob...*", (I wanted to ask if/whether ...)/"*Eine Frage:...*" (One question: ...) and "*Das ist (aber) nett (von Dir/Ihnen)*" ((Oh), that's kind of you) since in all of these cases, such increases represented a movement towards the German NS norm, the L(1) level of use, having been lower than that of the German NS norm prior to the year abroad. The problem with "*Kein Problem*" lies in the fact that the pragmatic routines "No problem" and "*Kein Problem*" share semantic content and a large number of — but not all — illocutionary forces. Firstly, "No problem" can be employed in the context of an initiative offer or a reoffer to make the offer more emphatic in both German and Irish English. Examples from the present NS data illustrate this point. The first example here includes the routine "*Kein Problem*" in an initiative offer, the second includes "No problem" in a reoffer:

(65) Lift, G24F:

- Du:* *Ja, ich glaube, wir müssen auch los.*
Professor: *Mir fällt ein. Sie wohnen doch beide in meiner Nähe. Ich könnte Sie mitnehmen. Kein Problem.*
Du: *Ach, das ist wirklich sehr nett. Aber ...*

(Lift, G24F (translation):

- You:* Yes, I think we better go too.
Professor: It's just occurred to me. Mm ... you both live near me. I could give you a lift. No problem.
You: Oh, that's really very kind. But ...)

(66) Maths, E1F:

- You:* I could give you some extra help after school if you would like.
Friend: No, you're okay. Thanks.
You: It's no problem.
Friend: Patricia is going to help me after school on Friday.
You: Okay so ...

Apart from appearing in offers and reoffers, "No problem" and "*Kein Problem*" are also common responses to a compliance with a request in both languages. In this case, both routines emphasise the willingness of the hearer to perform the future act in question for his/her interlocutor as can be seen here in the following German and IrEng NS examples. In both instances, an offer has been refused by suggesting an alternative deed which the speaker wishes the hearer to perform. The hearer agrees to comply with the particular request using the pragmatic routine "No problem".

- (67) Beverage, G6M:

Onkel: Was hältst Du von einer Tasse Kaffee?

Nichte/Neffe: Nein danke, aber wenn Du vielleicht einen Tee kochen würdest, das wäre klasse!

Onkel: Ach kein Problem, ich setze schon mal Wasser auf.

- (Beverage, G6M (translation):

Uncle: How about a cup of coffee?

Niece/nephew: No thanks, but if you'd make a cup of tea maybe, that would be great!

Uncle: Oh no problem, I'll put the kettle on).

- (68) Maths, E3F:

You: Really, I'm not too bad at that chapter, I can help, if you want.

Friend: Oh no, you have your own study to do.

You: We can do it together, I don't mind.

Friend: I do, I really have to study alone. Thanks anyway.

You: Okay then at least I offered.

Friend: Ye, thanks, maybe I can look at your notes before I go in, you never know they might help.

You: Sure, no problem.

A further context in which “No problem” and “*Kein Problem*” appear in both languages is in refusals of offers. As can be seen from the following German NS and IrEng NS examples, these pragmatic routines realise an off-the-hook strategy and serve here to reassure the offerer that the refuser does not need any help:

- (69) Bag, G24F:

Du: Wenn Du willst, helfe ich dir, deine schweren Koffer zu tragen.

Junge Frau: Danke für das nette Angebot. Aber ich schaffe das schon allein. Kein Problem.

- (Bag, G24F (translation):

You: If you want, I'll help you carry your heavy cases.

Girl: Thanks for the kind offer. But I'll manage on my own all right. No problem.)

- (70) Lift, E18F:

...Prof: Well, I have the car outside and look the rain is pouring down. Can I give you both a lift? Its on the way.

You: Oh God no but thanks a million. We have to stop off at the library on the way and get some lunch.

Prof: Are you sure now, I don't want to see you and your friend getting wet.

You: Oh that's no problem, as they say a little rain does no harm to anyone. We better go, thanks for the offer. Bye

Prof: You're welcome. I'm glad you enjoyed the lecture. Good day.

Not present in the current data base, but also an illocutionary force shared by “No problem” and “*Kein Problem*”, is their role in accepting an apology. Holmes

(1995:180), in a study of female and male speech norms in New Zealand, notes that “the most likely response from both women and men was to accept the apology with a remark such as ‘that’s OK’ or ‘no problem’”. The following example serves to illustrate this illocutionary force of “No problem”:¹²

- (71) A: Sorry to disturb you.
 B: No problem. What can I do for you?
 A: Well, ...
 (Data fabricated)

Finally, and most confusing of all, both “*Kein Problem*” and “No problem” are employed by German NS and IrEng NS as a Minimize where the expression of gratitude follows an acceptance of an offer or a compliance with a request (cf. Schauer 2001).

For the core group of Irish learners of German, positive transfer operates in the use of “*Kein Problem*” in the above contexts — in offering, complying with a request, refusing an offer, accepting an apology and also in minimizing an expression of gratitude — albeit not in situations involving a refusal of an offer. Consequently, the pragmatic routine is used without difficulties in their interlanguage in such instances.

In light of the large range of illocutionary forces shared by “*Kein Problem*” and “No problem”, there is little doubt that learners are exposed to this pragmatic routine in their second language input. It is suggested that the present Irish learners hear German native speakers employing this familiar routine regularly and, therefore, assume that its scope of employment is equivalent to that in their L1, i.e., that it also functions as a Minimize where the expression of gratitude forms part of a refusal of an offer, as seen in example (56). They are not forced to notice any gap between their IL and the L2 in this regard, negative feedback in the form of correction being unlikely due to native speakers’ interpretation of learners’ use of this inappropriate routine as impoliteness rather than as a lack of linguistic competence. Consequently, the learners happily increasingly engage in pragmatolinguistic overgeneralisation — given their higher confidence in and trust of such routines in general. They remain unaware that its use in German is interpreted by native speakers of German as an ironic comment or as a signal of the insincerity of a particular offer. In so doing, their pragmatic competence in this regard moved, not towards, but away from, the L2 norm.

Similar to the problems highlighted here on a pragmatolinguistic level, non-salient input means that differences between learner and German NS productions also exist on a sociopragmatic level at the end of the learners’ year abroad. Learners’ distribution of the pragmatic routine “*Ich wollte fragen, ob...*” in L(3) reveals, for example, that learners do not appear to analyse or be forced to analyse the relevant situational constellations. Instead, the routine is employed where the learners *themselves* deem appropriate. Similar findings are recorded in relation to the

pragmatic routine “*Das ist (sehr) nett von Dir/Ihnen*” which, in contrast to the German NS data, is not employed at all in the beverage situation. Indeed, these findings lend support to previous research discussed in 3.2.3 regarding the difficulty of mastering sociopragmatic norms due to the intricate relationship between these and an individual’s basic beliefs and values.

Can one speak of stages of acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence?

The present data provides some insight into the route which the development of L2 competence in the use of pragmatic routines appears to take. Evidence is provided for Bahns et al.’s (1986: 719f) and Kecskés’ (1999: 304) findings that engaging in creative, pragmatically somewhat inadequate verbalisations of pragmatic routines is part of the development process towards an L2-like use of routines (cf. 3.3.2.1.2). It is shown that a number of learner-specific pragmatic routines disappear with time in the target speech community. The present learners’ use of the pragmatic routine “*Ich wundere mich, ob...*”, a literal translation of “I wonder...” — a pragmatic routine employed in the learners’ L1 as a strategy to warn of an oncoming request in L(1) and L(2) — is one example of an interlanguage routine which disappears by time L(3). Also of relevance here is the decrease with time in learners’ use of “*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*” (Are you sure?) as a creative pragmatic routine to realise a reoffer.

In addition, the lexical and syntactic problems which learners experience in their use of L2 pragmatic routines decrease with time in the target speech community, increasingly taking an L2-like form. Examples include learners’ use of “*Mir ist egal*”, rather than “*Es ist mir egal*”, as an off-the-hook refusal strategy and of “*Sie sind/Du bist nett*”, where the hearer is directly addressed, rather than the L2-like impersonal form “*Das ist (sehr) nett von Dir/Ihnen*” as an expression of thanks. Such developments are suggested to relate to an increasing degree of automatization of the routines in question.

Although many of the developments recorded in the area of pragmatic routines in the present data were L2-like in both form and employment, the year abroad did not cure all interlanguage-specific features found in the learner data. In a number of cases, there was also an increase in L2-specific features over the year abroad as seen in learners’ creative use of pragmatic routines and false overgeneralisations. Apart from providing support for Bahns et al.’s research mentioned above, these findings echo those of Eisenstein/Bodman (1986: 176), who report that advanced learners of English, despite having lived for an average of two years in the US, used pragmatic routines in a pragmalinguistically and sociopragmatically inappropriate manner in expressing gratitude. Some examples from the present data include learners’ increasing pragmalinguistic overgeneralisation of the pragmatic routine

“*Kein Problem*” as a Minimize where the expression of gratitude forms part of a refusal of an offer, and the sociopragmatic overgeneralisation evident in the case of “*Ich wollte fragen, ob ...*”/“*Eine Frage: ...*”.

Whether or not the prediction made by Bahns et al. (1986) or Kecskés (1999: 304) that learners’ use of pragmatic routines finally returns to the target form after development in a non-linear fashion, is still a complex, uncertain issue. The answer appears to largely depend on the type of pragmatic routine and its degree of equivalence relative to the L1.

5.3 Internal modification

Syntactic downgraders and lexical and phrasal downgraders are the focus of the present section. In each case, the frequency of use of each of these modality markers is addressed as well as the choice and use of individual modifiers over time spent in the target speech community. Let us turn first to the analysis of syntactic downgraders.

5.3.1 Syntactic downgraders

The employment of syntactic downgraders is investigated for request and offer realisations. Concentration is exclusively on syntactic mitigation employed with conventionally indirect head act request and offer strategies. Conventionally indirect strategies are chosen because they are the most frequently occurring strategies in the realisation of both of these illocutions, as seen in Tables A14–6 and A13–8 in Appendix 13, and because they also offer considerable scope for syntactic mitigation.

Learners’ linguistic behaviour with regard to syntactic downgraders is analysed for offers and requests along two main lines prior to, during and after the year abroad relative to the German NS norm. These are: the general levels of syntactic downgrading present (5.3.1.1), and the types of syntactic downgraders employed (5.3.1.2) — in particular with regard to the relative complexity of the syntactic downgraders used. The research questions posed in the present study are answered separately for each of these levels of analysis.

5.3.1.1 Syntactic downgrading levels

Is there evidence of changes in learners’ L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the target speech community?

Offers — Initial analysis

The employment of syntactic downgraders with conventionally indirect head act initiative offer strategies is examined for five of the six situations under analysis, the

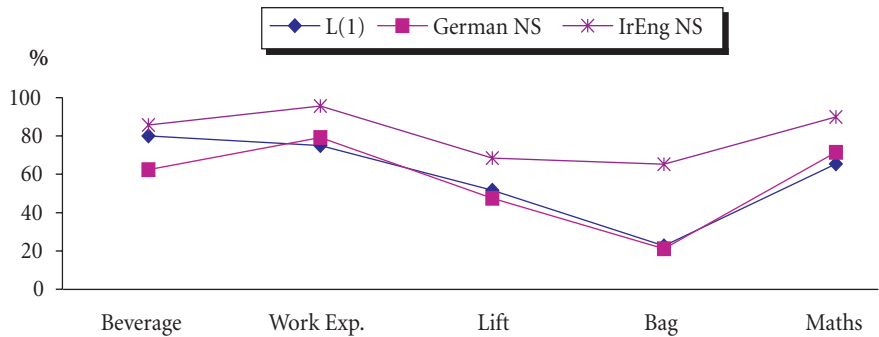


Figure 9. Frequency of syntactic downgraders by offer situation with conventionally indirect strategies.

accident situation being omitted due to a very low level of conventionally indirect head act strategies in the German data (cf. Table A13–6, Appendix 13).¹⁴

Figure 9 illustrates that the employment of syntactic downgraders by Irish learners in time L(1) is overall comparatively similar to German NS employment, with rather harmonious levels found in four of the five situations under analysis (cf. also Table A13–6, Appendix 13). Only in the beverage situation are levels somewhat different with the Irish learner level of syntactic downgrading surpassing the German NS level.

Offers — Development issues

Notable changes over time spent in the target speech community are seen in the lift

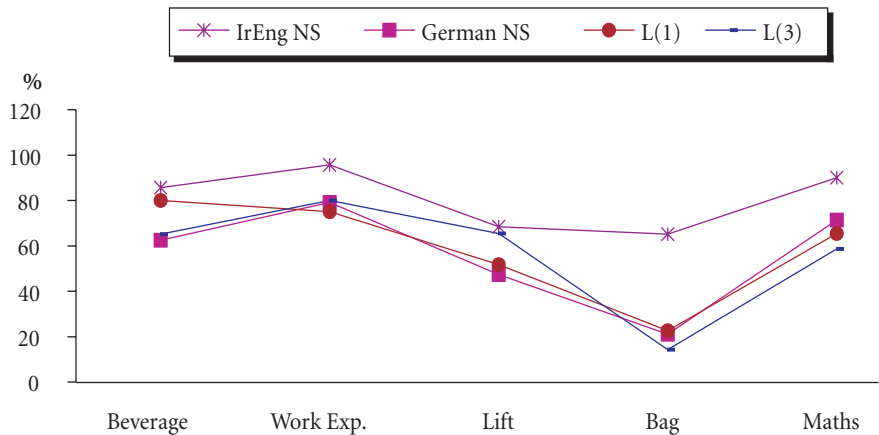


Figure 10. Frequency of syntactic downgraders by offer situation with conventionally indirect strategies — Developmental focus.

situation, where the level of syntactic downgrading shows an increase on the L(1) level away from the L2 norm, and also in the beverage situation, where a decrease in syntactic downgrading is seen over time towards the L2 norm. All other changes are minor (cf. Figure 10, Figure 9 and Table A13–7, Appendix 13).

Requests — Initial analysis

The frequency of employment of syntactic downgraders by German NS and Irish learners prior to their year abroad with conventionally indirect head act request strategies reveals some learner-specific situational variation. Although use of conventionally indirect strategies by German NS and learners at time L(1) is, on the whole, rather harmonious as far as situational variation is concerned, learners' levels of syntactic downgrading are lower than the L2 norm in a total of five of eight situations (cf. Figure 11, Table A13–8, Appendix 13), but particularly in the three standard situations investigated — the kitchen, police and application situations.

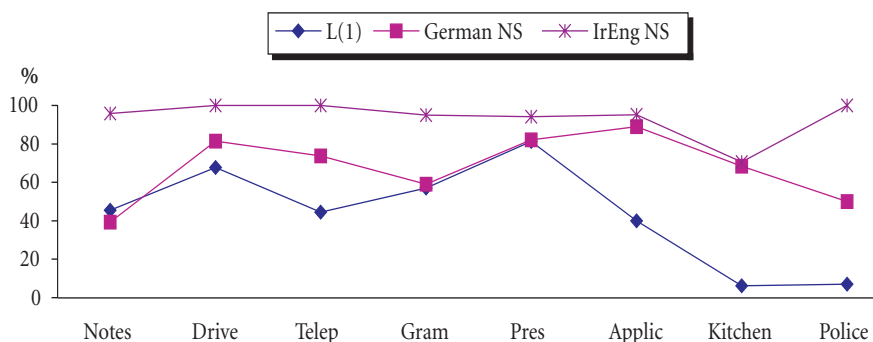


Figure 11. Frequency of syntactic downgraders by request situation with conventionally indirect strategies.

Requests — Development issues

Over time, the frequency of use of syntactic downgraders did not increase and move towards the L2 norm despite the general low L(1) employment of syntactic downgraders. Only in the grammar situation were considerable changes recorded; here there was a sizeable drop in syntactic downgrading away from the L2 norm (cf. Figure 12 and also Table A13–8, Appendix 13). All other changes — both increases and decreases — were rather minor. The low level of learner syntactic mitigation in the standard situations remained striking.

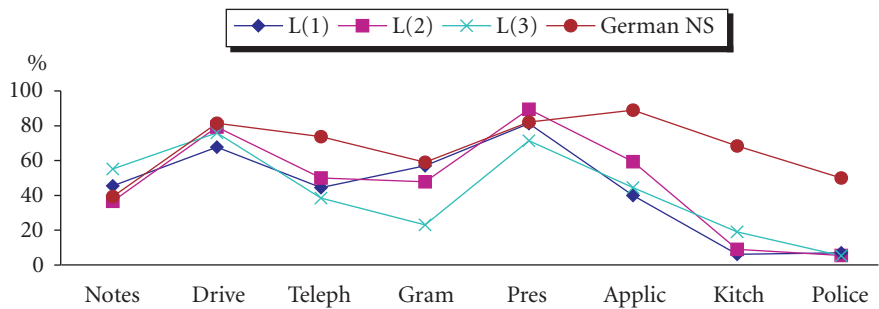


Figure 12. Frequency of syntactic downgraders by request situation with conventionally indirect strategies — Developmental focus.

Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?

Transfer — Initial analysis

A comparison of the IrEng NS, German NS and L(1) data reveals that transfer does not appear to have strong explanatory power in learners’ L2-like use of syntactic downgraders in the present learner offer or request data prior to the year abroad. The IrEng NS offer data shows a much higher use of syntactic downgraders in all situations under analysis relative to that found in the German NS, or indeed in the learner data, with the exception of the beverage situation — the only offer situation in which transfer can be posited (cf. Figure 9, Table A13–6, Appendix 13).

A glance at Figure 11 reveals that transfer from the learners’ L1, Irish English, has no substantial explanatory power in the request situations either (cf. also Table A13–8, Appendix 13). In all eight request situations the IrEng NS level exceeds both the L(1) and the German NS level. Indeed, neither are the considerable differences observed in the syntactic downgrading of the L(1) informants compared to the L2 norm in the standard request situations reflected in the IrEng NS data. On the contrary, it is the standard kitchen and application form situations in which the German NS level comes nearest to the IrEng NS level.¹⁵

Transfer — Development issues

Negative transfer is not a feature of the L(1) data and this remains the general case in the development data (cf. Figure 10, A13–7, A13–8, Appendix 13). In the offer data, there is a decrease in negative transfer in the beverage situation, with syntactic downgrading levels falling towards the L2 norm. In the lift situation, on the other hand, syntactic downgrading levels increase over time in the target speech community, representing an increase in pragmatic transfer — of a negative nature. In the

request data, the overall lack of substantial changes means that increases or decreases in transfer are not an issue; transfer thus remains unimportant. Non-transfer in the case of the standard situations under analysis continues to exist, as learners fail to engage in positive sociopragmatic transfer over time.

What implications do any changes or lack of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence have for our understanding of the development of L2 pragmatic competence?

The present learners appear to exploit their universal pragmatic competence in mitigating syntactically in both offer and request conventionally indirect strategies. However, the question must be posed as to how the different levels of syntactic downgrading in the various datasets can be explained, and, in particular, the question addressed as to why the changes in the levels of syntactic downgrading employed by learners prior to and following their year abroad were overall comparatively small. In attempting to explain such matters, it is necessary to differentiate between the present standard request situations on the one hand, and the non-standard request situations and the offer situations on the other hand. Let us start with the standard request situations.

A possible explanation for low levels of syntactic downgrading relative to the L1 and L2 norm, such as those recorded in the present learner data standard request situations in L(1) through to L(3), is a learner preference for the strategy of least effort. It may be that learners tend to overgeneralise the referential function of language in contexts where the relational function is appropriate given a need to concentrate on the realisation of the illocution itself without mitigation. In other words, despite perhaps wishing to downgrade syntactically, learners may not be in a position to do so, possibly lacking a sufficient level of pragmalinguistic competence in relation to the use of complex structures. However, it is difficult to imagine how standard situations, in which role relations are clearly marked, could be considerably more cognitively complex for learners to deal with than non-standard situations (in which comparatively high syntactic downgrading levels were recorded). It cannot be argued that the lower competence in the standard situations is due to their being particularly unfamiliar or unrealistic for students based at least on the assessment data presented in Appendix 7. Indeed, both the application form and kitchen situations were rated particularly high as regards their realistic value — respectively 2 and 1.9, where 2 is the highest level on a scale of 1–2; the police situation was also judged to be realistic, with a score of 1.7. Similar assessments of the frequency of occurrence of the situations support the familiarity of the situations (cf. Appendix 7). Consequently, we must look further for an explanation of learners' low levels of syntactic downgrading in the three standard request situations relative to the L1 and L2 norms.

It is suggested here that such behaviour is due to metapragmatic issues — and specifically to an overgeneralisation of metapragmatic awareness in relation to the relative directness levels used in German compared to Irish English. As detailed in 5.1 (*“No means no!”*), data from the pre-year abroad questionnaire revealed, for example, that learners increasingly associated directness with the German people over their year abroad (cf. Appendix 11). In addition, on the post-year abroad questionnaire, 100% of learners, when asked how they would judge German NS and Irish NS as regards directness, replied that Germans were more direct, 62.1% being of the opinion that Germans are “a lot more direct” and 37.9% of the opinion that they are “a little more direct”. When asked on the same questionnaire to assess the level of directness they themselves use when speaking German and English, 44.8% said they were “more direct”, 37.9% said “just as direct or indirect” and 10.3% “less direct”. In other words, learners noticed a difference — or in Schmidt’s (1993) terms, “noticed a gap” — in relative directness levels. They increasingly perceived German NS to use language in a more direct manner relative to their L1 norms of linguistic action over time spent in the target speech community. Explicit input in the form of critical incidents — not least in the case of offer-refusal exchanges — may serve to develop or, indeed, reinforce learners’ view that German NS are more direct than L1 speakers (cf. 5.1). It is suggested that such a general awareness of culture-specific differences contributed to learners’ overall rather low use of syntactic downgrading in the present standard situations in L(1) through to L(3) — in the latter case despite increases in individual learners’ processing capacity which will be seen in 5.3.1.2. In other words, it appears that despite having the competence to downgrade syntactically to a larger degree as early as L(1) — as shown in the remaining request and offer situations — and indeed, more so in L(3) (cf. 5.3.1.2), learners chose not to do so. But why should learners “try out” their beliefs regarding a higher level of directness in standard but not in non-standard situations? A likely reason may be that interpersonal relations are not of primary importance in standard situations given relatively clear role relations. Learners may, therefore, feel that they can “afford” to be “as direct as the Germans” in such situations given their right to pose the request and their interactants’ obligation to comply. In standard situations, relational aspects are, namely, not of primary interest in attempting to persuade the interlocutor to comply with the request and so learners, it may be suggested, do not have much to lose. However, it is clear that although learners’ awareness has some basis in reality (in the light of the present data and given previous findings by Blum-Kulka/House 1989, for example, who show that there is a tendency among German NS to prefer a higher degree of directness than British NS in requesting), learners greatly “overdo” the directness level in these standard situations, even in the police situation, where German NS levels are considerably lower than in the IrEng NS data. In other words, they overgeneralise their meta-pragmatic awareness of German NS’ directness levels. Further evidence for this

metapragmatic explanation is provided in the next section, where we will see a decrease rather than an increase — as recorded in all the non-standard situations — in the complexity of the syntactic downgraders employed in the standard application situation from L(1) to L(3).

Turning now to the present non-standard request situations and to the offer situations, we saw that levels of syntactic downgrading in these situations were lower than in the learners' L1 but rather harmonious with German NS levels in the offer data in particular and to a lesser extent in the request data. It may be argued that some learners, despite wishing to act linguistically as in their L1, may be overburdened with inserting mitigation. They may, thus, be forced to concentrate on realising the basic head act strategy only, resulting in a lack of modality markers. Such behaviour would, in the present cases, be co-incidentally L2-like. However, no substantial changes are found in the syntactic downgrading levels in this situation despite the fact that, as is shown in 5.3.1.2, learners' control over processing increases over time. Consequently, a metapragmatic explanation is more probable. As indicated above, learners may be of the opinion that they should be more direct in their L2 request realisations but — in contrast to the case in standard situations — many of them may feel a need to comply with their L1 behaviour as much as possible since interpersonal relations must be nurtured and protected in non-standard situations. In other words, it may be that a large number of learners do not apply the perceptions they have of the L2-like use of the German language to their production of offer or request illocutions, since they feel this may have negative consequences for them personally — a feasible explanation, it is suggested, given learners' tendency to frequently recourse to risk-free strategies. Indeed, this interpretation is supported by some of the metapragmatic data elicited within the framework of the present study. Asked whether, if they detect any differences in directness between language use among IrEng NS and German NS, learners judge these to be positive or negative, 65.5% of the present informants replied that it depends. Some of comments they wrote regarding the higher level of directness they perceived in German include:

- (72) A17F:
They [German NS] get what they want by being direct. You know exactly where you stand with them.
- (73) A9F:
Sometimes it is better to be more direct. Being more truthful you get what you want.
- (74) A15F:
Positive as they [German NS] get what they want without beating around the bush, it is a very assertive & important make-up and I am glad to have experienced it and hope it rubs off on me a bit.

- (75) A22F:
Being direct is good to clarify and to know where you stand on a particular issue/
topic. However, their directness translates as commands and orders rather than
polite requests which can be offensive.
- (76) A8F:
Directness may come across as insensitivity, on the other hand it tends to be
more honest.
- (77) A27F:
Sometimes being too direct can hurt people's feelings. Sometimes it's better to be
indirect or not to say anything.
- (78) A21F:
Generally I would regard the fact that they [German NS] are so direct as some-
thing very positive because you always knew where you stand with them. I think,
however that sometimes without meaning to be, they can be insensitive.

These comments reveal that learners recognise the advantages of directness — namely, the fact that the interlocutor knows where s/he stands and that one gets one's own way more than would otherwise be the case. However, whereas learner A15F (example 74) hopes that this higher degree of directness “rubs off” on her a bit, other learners appear to associate these cross-cultural differences in language use with a lack of sensitivity which they sometimes find unnecessary and hard to take. Indeed, learner A22F (example 75) refers directly to requests, explaining that such directness causes polite requests to gain the status of commands and orders.

In sum, then it appears as if learners' metapragmatic perceptions of a direct use of the German language are translated into more direct linguistic action in the standard request situations to a larger degree than in the non-standard request situations and in the offer situations. This does not, however, mean that such perceptions do not affect request realisations in non-standard situations — quite the contrary in fact: Despite a greater control over processing (cf. 5.3.1.2) and a consequent ability to emulate L1 levels, syntactic downgrading levels do not increase over time due — it is suggested — to a tendency among some learners to translate their metapragmatic perceptions into action.

5.3.1.2 *Syntactic downgrader complexity*

As far as the analysis of relative complexity is concerned, four primary types of syntactic downgraders are employed in the present data with conventionally indirect head act strategies for both offers and requests. These are negation (of preparatory conditions), conditionals, conditional clauses and conditional combinations comprising the various combinations occurring with conditionals outlined in 4.4.1.3.1 (cf. also Appendix 10.2.2). The subjunctive is also used to a very small extent in the request data. Of this variety of syntactic downgraders, negation and conditionals are the least complex, and conditional clauses and, most particularly

conditional combinations, the most complex. The level of complexity is established by comparing the level of negation and conditionals present with that of conditional clauses and conditional combinations.¹⁶

Is there evidence of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the target speech community?

Offers — Initial analysis

This analysis of the relative complexity of syntactic downgrading employed in interlanguage offers concentrates on four situations. As in the previous section, the accident situation is omitted due to the low level of conventionally indirect head act strategies employed. In addition, in the light of the low level of syntactic downgraders employed in the bag situation in all datasets (cf. Table A13–6, Table A13–7, Appendix 13), this situation is also excluded from the present analysis.

The range of syntactic downgraders employed by the learner informants at time L(1) and by the German NS is similar, with the exception of negation which is only employed by German NS — and then only in the lift and beverage situations (cf. Table 25).

As regards levels of complexity, it is evident that the level of complexity of the learners' syntactic downgraders used in conventionally indirect offer strategies prior to the year abroad is lower than the German NS level in the work experience and maths situations and, to a lesser extent, in the beverage situation. In the work experience situation, for example, conditionals form the bulk of the syntactic downgraders employed by the Irish learners with a conventionally indirect head act strategy and conditional combinations are not recorded. In the German NS data in this situation, by contrast, conditional combinations are well represented. The lift situation reveals the least differences in relative complexity.

Offers — Development issues

With time in the target speech community, a very clear increase in complexity towards the L2 norm is observed in three of the four situations under analysis — the exception being the beverage situation, where no substantial changes are recorded (cf. Table 25, Figures A13–2 to A13–5, Appendix 13). In these three situations — the work experience, lift and maths situations — there is a gradual decrease in conditionals and an increase in the use of conditional clauses and conditional combinations. Such changes bring learners' interlanguage realisations nearer the L2 norm.

Table 25. Frequency of types of syntactic downgraders by offer situation with conventionally indirect strategies — Developmental focus^a

	Work experience					Lift					Maths					Beverage				
	N	C	CC	CComb	N	C	CC	CComb	N	C	CC	CComb	N	C	CC	CComb	N	C	CC	CComb
L(1)	—	88.9	11.1	—	—	93.4	—	6.6	—	58	15.7	26.3	—	100	—	—	—	—	—	—
L(2)	—	73.3	13.3	13.2	—	76.5	5.8	17.7	—	53.3	40	6.7	—	100	—	—	—	—	—	—
L(3)	—	50	29.2	20.8	—	58.9	23.5	17.6	—	23.5	52.9	23.5	6.6	86.6	6.6	—	—	—	—	—
German NS	—	57.8	10.5	31.6	22.1	66.6	—	11.2	—	—	50	50	20	60	10	10	—	—	—	—
IrEng NS	—	36.4	22.7	40.9	—	84.6	15.4	—	—	16.7	50	33.3	—	100	—	—	—	—	—	—

N: Negation; C: Conditional; CC: Conditional clause; CComb: Conditional combinations
^a All values are expressed in percentages.

Requests — Initial analysis

In the present analysis of the complexity of syntactic downgraders employed in request realisations, the focus is on those situations in which a relatively high level of syntactic downgraders is used with conventionally indirect head act strategies. A comparison of the realisation of syntactic downgrading in the kitchen and police situation is not possible here given the very low levels of syntactic downgrader use in L(1) through to L(3) (cf. Table A13–8, Appendix 13).¹⁷ The primary combinations which occur in the present data comprise conditionals and conditional clauses; tense, conditional and conditional clauses; and aspect, tense, conditionals and conditional clauses.

A comparison of the learner data prior to the period abroad with the data from the target norm shows that, similar to the case of offers, both those learners at time L(1) and those German NS who did use syntactic mitigation in their conventionally indirect requests employed all four types of syntactic mitigation to some extent, with the exception of negation, which is, for the most part, only employed by German NS — although, not in all situations (cf. Table 26). The subjunctive was also used to a very limited extent in the presentation situation by German NS only.

Relative to the offer data, the types of syntactic downgraders employed by the learners in L(1) relative to the German NS norm show a somewhat diverse picture of complexity level according to situation. In the presentation, grammar and, to a lesser extent, telephone situation, the L(1) data is less complex than the German NS data measured according to the level of combinations. However, in the drive, application form and notes situations, the learners initially use more complex constructions than the German NS.

Requests — Development issues

Similar to the offer data, a general increase in complexity is also evident in learners' syntactic downgrading in request realisations. In fact, in five of the six situations under analysis, there is an increase in syntactic complexity over time — the exception being the application form situation, where a slight decrease in complexity is observed (cf. Table 26, Figures A13–6 to A13–11, Appendix 13). In the drive situation, for example, the frequency of use of conditionals with conventionally indirect strategies decreases gradually from time L(1) to L(3). This is, however, offset by a large increase in the use of combinations.

The level of complexity of syntactic downgrading in the request situations reveals much situational variation. In two of the three situations in which the L(1) level had surpassed the L2 norm — namely in the drive and notes situations — the increase in syntactic downgrading also represents a movement further away from the norm, resulting in over-complex L(3) utterances. Some examples from the present learner data may serve to illustrate the effect of this over-complexity:

Table 26. Frequency of types of syntactic downgraders by request situation with conventionally indirect strategies — Developmental focus^a

	Notes				Drive				Presentation			
	N	C	CC	CComb	N	C	CC	CComb	Subj	C	CC	CComb
L(1)	—	73.3	13.3	13.4	—	71.5	23.8	4.7	—	84.7	7.7	7.7
L(2)	—	81.8	9.1	9.1	—	60.9	13	26	—	70.6	5.9	23.6
L(3)	—	62.5	25	12.6	—	54.5	4.5	40.8	—	53.4	6.7	40
German NS	18.2	72.7	—	9.1	—	86.4	—	13.6	4.3	65.2	—	26
IrEng NS	—	47.7	8.7	43.4	3.8	23.1	—	73	—	43.8	—	56

	Grammar				Telephone				Application			
	N	C	CC	CComb	N	C	CC	CComb	N	C	CC	CComb
L(1)	—	87.6	—	12.4	—	100	—	—	—	66.7	—	33.3
L(2)	—	72.8	9	18.2	—	83.4	16.6	—	—	56.3	6.3	37.4
L(3)	—	67	16.5	16.5	—	80	20	—	—	75	—	25
German NS	—	77.2	—	22.8	—	92.8	—	7.2	—	79.2	—	20.8
IrEng NS	—	31.6	—	68.4	—	66.7	—	33.3	—	35	—	65

N: Negation; Subj: Subjunctive; C: Conditional; CC: Conditional clause; CComb: Conditional combinations
^a All values are expressed in percentages.

- (79) Drive, A12F:

Entschuldigung bitte ... ich wollte bloß fragen, ob es möglich wäre, daß Sie mir nach Hause fahren könnten.

“Entschuldigung bitte ... ich wollte (tense) bloß fragen, ob (conditional clause) es möglich wäre (conditional), daß Sie mir nach Hause fahren könnten” (conditional).

(Drive, A12F (translation): Excuse me please ... I just wanted to ask, if it would be possible that you could give me a lift home).

Syntactic downgrading: tense + conditional clause + conditional + conditional.

- (80) Drive, C1F:

Entschuldigen Sie bitte ... Wenn Sie nach Hause fahren, könnte ich mit Ihnen fahren, wenn das möglich ist.

“Entschuldigen Sie bitte ... Wenn (conditional clause) Sie nach Hause fahren, könnte (conditional) ich mit Ihnen fahren, wenn (conditional clause) das möglich ist.”

(Drive, C1F (translation): Excuse me please ... If you are going home, could I have a lift, if (conditional clause) that is possible).

Syntactic downgrading: conditional clause + conditional + conditional clause

In both cases, over-complexity of syntactic downgraders gives the impression that the speaker is lacking in self-confidence.

The application form revealed a higher level of complexity in L(1), learners prior to the year abroad tending to employ complex constructions, such as:

- (81) Application form, A12F:

Ich möchte gern wissen, ob Sie mir die Bewerbungsformuläre schicken könnten.

“Ich möchte (conditional) gern wissen, ob (conditional clause) Sie mir die Bewerbungsformuläre schicken könnten” (conditional).

(Application form, A12F (translation): I would like to know if you could send me the application forms).

Syntactic downgrading: conditional + conditional clause + conditional.

In contrast, many of the German NS preferred a simple conditional, such as in the following example:

- (82) Application form, G4F:

Könnten Sie mir bitte ein Bewerbungsformular zuschicken?

(Application form, G4F (translation): Could you send me an application form please?)

Syntactic downgrading: conditional

With time, however, complexity in the learner realisations decreases in this situation, representing a movement towards the L2 norm.

In the remaining situations in which the L(1) level was initially lower, namely in the presentation, grammar and telephone situations, the recorded increase in

syntactic complexity represented a movement towards the German NS norm. However, in these three situations, employment of syntactic downgraders in the final dataset elicited (L(3)) exceeded the complexity of the German data.

Changes — Summary

In both the offer and request realisations in the present data, the relative complexity of the syntactic downgraders employed by Irish learners increases over time spent in the target speech community and so moves closer towards that of the German NS norm. However, in individual cases, such as in the lift situation in the offer data, and also in five of the six request situations under analysis, the German NS level is surpassed by L(3), resulting in over-complexity.

Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?

Transfer — Initial analysis

Transfer prior to the year abroad is most evident in the request data. Here there is a uniform pattern of a high degree of syntactic complexity in the IrEng NS data relative to the German NS data. Indeed, in all six request situations under analysis, the IrEng NS in the present study employ syntactic downgraders of a higher degree of complexity relative to their German counterparts (cf. Table 26). This considerably higher level of syntactic downgrading in Irish English relative to German reflects findings by Faerch/Kasper (1989: 226) for British NS and German NS, where British English NS requests were found to be syntactically more complex than German NS requests. In the L(1) data, despite levels of complexity which are well below the IrEng NS level, the L(1) level surpasses the German NS level for complexity in three situations out of six, i.e., in the notes, drive and application form situations — evidence of negative transfer.

Transfer — Development issues

The overall increase in the complexity of the syntactic downgraders employed with the present learners' offer and request conventionally indirect head act strategies is proposed to relate to an increase in pragmatic transfer from the learners' L1.

In the offer situations, work experience and maths, L(1) levels increase towards the IrEng NS level over time, although the level of learner syntactic downgrader complexity remains lower than the IrEng NS level in L(3). Positive transfer is suggested to be at play here. In the lift situation, on the other hand, the IrEng NS level of complexity in offering is exceeded in L(3). Overgeneralisation is found here

relative to the German NS norm. Similarly, in the requesting data, the higher level of complexity in learner syntactic downgrading in time L(3) reflects the high levels revealed in the IrEng NS data to a greater degree than in L(1), representing an increase in negative transfer — negative transfer since the resulting learner utterances are over-complex relative to the L2 norm. The application form situation represents the exception here, levels of complexity having decreased away from the L1 norm in this situation over time.

In sum then, it seems that transfer in this particular feature of pragmatic competence has increased with length of stay in the target speech community.

What implications do any changes or lack of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence have for our understanding of the development of L2 pragmatic competence?

Prior to the year abroad, in the work experience and maths offer situations, and in the presentation, grammar and telephone request situations, the German NS level of syntactic complexity was closer to the IrEng NS level than either NS group to the L(1) level. Learners' overgeneralisation of simple structures where a more complex structure would be more suitable appears to be an appropriate explanation for this initial trend. In other words, learners' tendency to use a strategy of least effort due to a possible lack of competence in the use of complex structures in the L2 is of relevance.

Such a strategy of least effort tends, however, to decrease over the year abroad among those learners who employ syntactic downgraders. Indeed, the overall increases in the complexity of the syntactic downgraders employed by learners would appear to relate to improvements in learners' control of processing. In other words, practice in accessing such complex structures in the second language context is thought to be the trigger. Added to this is, given a greater confidence in their use of complex syntactic downgraders, possibly a desire by the present learners to "show off" their competence in the foreign language.

Can one speak of stages of acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence?

The complexification hypothesis explains the path taken by learners' choice of syntactic downgraders in the present analysis. It appears namely that with time, learners' preferences move from syntactically easy-to-use structures to those which demand a higher level of grammatical competence. In other words, those structures which are easier to use become automated prior to more complex structures. Consequently, such complex structures have no longer to be avoided at the end of the year abroad for reasons of cognitive overload.

Regarding the path taken by learners in their use of syntactic modification, it appears that a period of over-complexity follows a period of under-complexity or L2-like complexity. This is seen, for example, in the over-complexity found in five of the six request situations under analysis at the end of the year abroad and in one of the four offer situations. As suggested above, such a stage may be the result of learners' desire to show-off their newly acquired competence.

As far as the speech acts, requests and offers are concerned, if we assume that the curve of development suggested holds to some degree, it appears that the present learners' competence in realising requests is more advanced than that of offers prior to the year abroad. The levels of syntactic complexity in request realisations using a conventionally indirect head act strategy were, for instance, more complex than the L2 data in three of the six situations under analysis as early as L(1) — in the offer data, no such over-complexity was recorded in L(1). By L(3), over-complexity was found in five of these six request situations — the application form being the exception. Of the four offer situations investigated, on the other hand, overgeneralisation was only found in the lift situation.

5.3.2 Lexical & phrasal downgraders

The importance of lexical and phrasal downgraders and the desirability of an L2-like choice of lexical and phrasal downgraders in the realisations of requests and refusals of offers in German was outlined in 4.4.1.3.2. In the light of this discussion, the frequency with which the present group of learners employ lexical and phrasal downgraders and the types of lexical and phrasal downgraders they choose are analysed in the following for both of these speech acts over time spent in the target speech community. In order to facilitate a comprehensive overview, the present informants' use of lexical and phrasal downgraders in realisations of refusals of offers is analysed over both initial and first subsequent refusals taken together in the light of the present learners' preference — in L(1) at least — for an overall more complex exchange structure than that employed by native speakers of German (cf. 5.1). The analysis of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed with requests focuses exclusively on conventionally indirect (CI) head act strategies in non-standard situations.

The presentation of results and the overview of changes in pragmatic transfer follow separately for the analysis of the levels of lexical and phrasal downgrading and of the choice of downgraders, whereas research questions three and four concerning the research implications and the possible stages of development suggested by the results are addressed for both lexical and phrasal downgrader levels and types together. Let us start with the analysis of the levels of lexical and phrasal downgrader use.

5.3.2.1 Lexical & phrasal downgrading levels

Is there evidence of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the target speech community?

Refusals of offers — Initial analysis

Prior to their stay in the target speech community, learners' use of lexical and phrasal downgraders in realisations of refusals of offers is lower than the levels employed by German NS in all six refusal situations under analysis (cf. Figure 13 and also Table A13–9, Appendix 13). In the maths situation, the gap between the German NS and learner levels is particularly wide. In this situation, the L(1) informants use a relatively low number of lexical and phrasal downgraders relative to the other situations, whereas the German NS use more downgrading here than in almost any other situation. In the lift situation, on the other hand, the learners in L(1) downgrade to a comparatively large extent relative to the remaining situations; the German NS downgrade here to the least extent of all situations. Consequently, L2 and learner downgrading levels in this situation are close relative to the remaining situations.

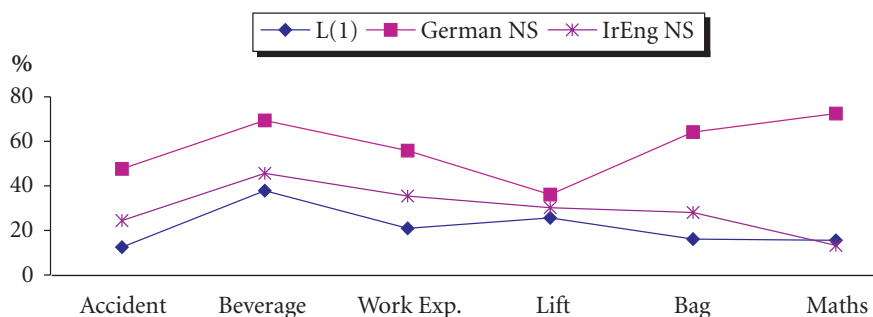


Figure 13. Frequency of lexical and phrasal downgraders over initial and first subsequent refusals.

Refusals of offers — Development issues

The relatively low overall levels of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed by learners in refusing offers prior to the year abroad rise over time spent in the target speech community — representing a clear development towards the L2 norm. In Figure 14, we see an increase in the use of lexical and phrasal downgraders from L(1) to L(3) in four of the six situations analysed, i.e., in the beverage, work experience, bag and maths situations (cf. also Table 28). Although in the maths situation such development occurs rather early in the students' stay in the L2 speech

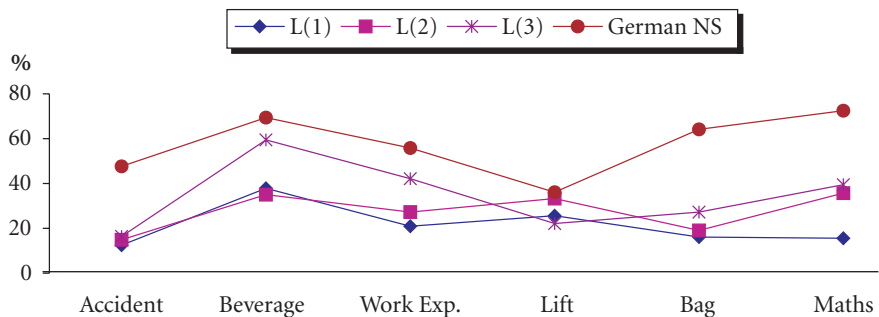


Figure 14. Frequency of lexical and phrasal downgraders over initial and first subsequent refusals — Developmental focus.

community, the development is slower in the other situations, not being recorded until L(3).

Despite these notable increases towards the L2 norm, however, L(3) levels remain clearly below the L2 norm in every situation — most notably in the maths, bag and accident situations.

Requests — Initial analysis

Prior to the year abroad, learners’ competence in requesting appears to be higher than for refusing judged on the basis of their use of lexical and phrasal downgraders. Both the German NS and the Irish learners in L(1) use lexical and phrasal downgraders to a relatively similar extent in three of the five request situations when using a conventionally indirect head act strategy. Only in the drive and presentation situations does German NS employment exceed L(1) levels — albeit then considerably (cf. Figure 15, Table 27).

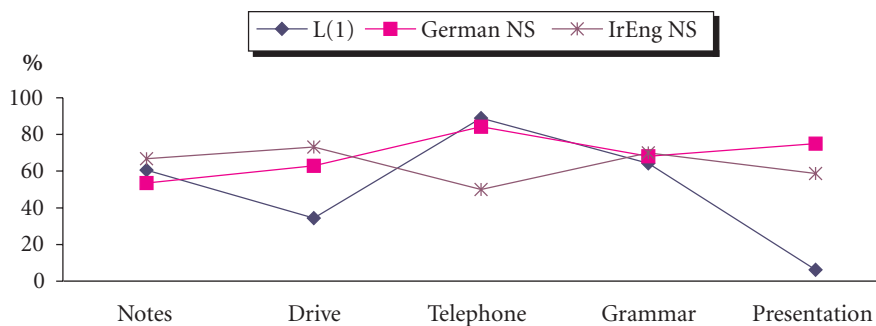


Figure 15. Frequency of lexical and phrasal downgraders with conventionally indirect head act strategies in non-standard request situations.

Requests — Development issues

Learners' use of lexical and phrasal downgraders with conventionally indirect request strategies remains approximately stable from L(1) to L(3) in those three situations — the notes, telephone and grammar situations — in which L(1) and German levels were rather harmonious prior to the year abroad. Of the two remaining situations, it is only in the presentation situation that use of these modality markers increases in the direction of the L2 norm, learner levels in the drive situation not changing substantially over time (cf. Table 27).

Table 27. Frequency of lexical and phrasal downgraders with conventionally indirect head act strategies in non-standard request situations — Developmental focus

		Notes	Drive	Telephone	Grammar	Presentation
L(1)	% CI	100	97	52.9	82.4	88.9
	% L&PD	60.6	34.4	88.9	64.3	6.2
L(2)	% CI	93.8	90.6	37.5	76.7	79.2
	% L&PD	56.7	41.4	66.7	82.6	21.1
L(3)	% CI	87.9	87.9	39.4	78.8	72.4
	% L&PD	55.2	37.9	84.6	65.4	28.6
German NS	% CI	93.3	90	63.3	75.9	93.3
	% L&PD	53.6	63	84.2	68.2	75
IrEng NS	% CI	88.9	96.3	50	90.9	85
	% L&PD	66.7	73.1	50	70	58.8

CI = Conventionally indirect strategies; L&PD = Lexical and phrasal downgraders.

Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?

Transfer — Initial analysis

Transfer appears to have only limited explanatory power with regard to learners' lexical and phrasal downgrading behaviour prior to the year abroad in their refusal of offer and request realisations. At first glance, it would seem that learners' low overall levels of lexical and phrasal downgraders in their refusals of offers may be due to pragmatic transfer, since, as seen in Figure 13 (cf. also Table 28), less lexical and phrasal downgraders are employed in the IrEng NS data than in the German NS data in all situations. However, a closer look reveals that IrEng NS' use of lexical and phrasal downgraders is higher than L(1) use in four of the six refusal situations — the exceptions being the maths situation and, to a lesser extent, the lift situation, where levels are similar. Negative transfer can thus only be suggested to affect learners' realisations in these two situations.

In the request data, positive transfer can be suggested to be at play in the notes and grammar situations, where all three datasets show similar values. However, there are other instances, such as the telephone situation, where both the L(1) and German NS values far surpass the IrEng NS levels (cf. Figure 15, Table 27). In addition, transfer is clearly not the reason for the considerable differences between the L(1) and German NS levels recorded in the presentation and drive situations, since in both of these situations, the L(1) levels are far below either the German NS or IrEng NS levels.

Transfer — Development issues

Over time, some minor changes are recorded in the role played by transfer in explaining learners' use of lexical and phrasal downgraders in the refusal of offer and request data. However, overall transfer remains of limited importance.

Table 28 which shows the use of lexical and phrasal downgraders in refusals of offers reveals, for example, that in contrast to the L(1) data, transfer cannot be regarded as an explanatory factor for learners' downgrading behaviour in the maths situation, since IrEng NS levels are clearly surpassed. In contrast, however, transfer increases in the bag situation — the L(3) levels of lexical and phrasal downgrading reaching the same level as in the IrEng NS data. As far as the work experience and beverage situations are concerned, learner levels in these situations increased towards, but then surpassed, the IrEng NS level — consequently, transfer continues to have no explanatory weight.

In the request data (cf. Table 27), positive transfer continues to be of relevance in explaining L(3) levels of lexical and phrasal downgrader use in the notes and grammar situations as in the pre-year abroad data. The slight increases in lexical

Table 28. Frequency of lexical and phrasal downgraders over initial and first subsequent refusals — Developmental focus^a

	Accident	Beverage	Work Exp.	Lift	Bag	Maths	Average
L(1)	12.5	37.8	21	25.6	16.1	15.6	21.4
L(2)	14.9	35.1	27.3	33.3	19	35.7	27.5
L(3)	16.4	59.4	42.1	22.2	27.3	39.5	34.5
German NS	47.6	69.4	55.9	36.1	64.1	72.5	57.6
IrEng NS	24.4	45.6	35.5	30.2	28	13.3	29.5

^a All values are expressed in percentages.

and phrasal downgrader use in the drive and presentation situations over time represent an increase towards the IrEng NS levels — although they remain far below IrEng NS and German NS levels.

5.3.2.2 *Lexical & phrasal downgrading types*

In this section, the actual lexical and phrasal downgrading types employed by the learners and native speakers are investigated first for refusals of offers (5.3.2.2.1), and then for requests (5.3.2.2.2). Although the analysis of the types of lexical and phrasal downgraders focuses on all six refusal of offer situations, it concentrates on only four non-standard request situations, the presentation situation being excluded due to the particularly low level of lexical and phrasal downgraders found in the preceding analysis (cf. Table 27).

5.3.2.2.1 *Refusals of offers*

Refusals of offers — Lexical and phrasal downgrader types — Initial analysis

All the types of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed by the present German NS in realising refusals of offers are also employed by the learners in L(1) with the exception of the cajoler (cf. Table A13–10, Appendix 13). An example of its employment is seen in the following example:

- (83) Work experience, G13F:
Neue ChefIn: Ach nein, wissen Sie, Sie haben hier doch wirklich genug zu tun
 (Work experience, G13F (translation): ...*New boss: Oh no, you know, you've really enough to be doing here ...*)

However, the cajoler is not employed to any large extent in the German NS data.

The downtoner is the lexical and phrasal downgrader employed most in the German NS data in all six refusal situations. The following represent examples of the present learners' use of these lexical and phrasal downgraders in their refusal realisations:

- (84) Bag, A17F:
Frau: es geht schon — Danke. Tschüß ...
(Bag, A17F (translation): *Girl: I'm all right — thanks. Bye...*)
- (85) Work experience, C6M:
... Neue Chefin: Danke schön für Deine angebot, aber ... Er muß einfach lernen, aber er ist sehr faul.
(Work experience, C6M (translation): *New boss: Thanks for the offer ... he just has to study but he's very lazy.)*

Although the overall L(1) levels of downtoners are less than in the German NS data given lower levels of lexical and phrasal downgraders overall, the relative proportion of lexical and phrasal downgraders taking the form of downtoners is relatively high in the learner data prior to the year abroad. Downtoners are namely found to be the most popular or joint most popular means of lexical and phrasal downgrading in five of the six refusal situations in the L(1) data — although not matching their popularity in German NS data, nonetheless rather similar (cf. Table A13–10, Appendix 13). As far as levels of downtoners are concerned, the present German NS employ the downtoner to a greater extent than the learners in L(1) in every situation except the accident situation, where levels are approximately equal, as seen in Figure 16.

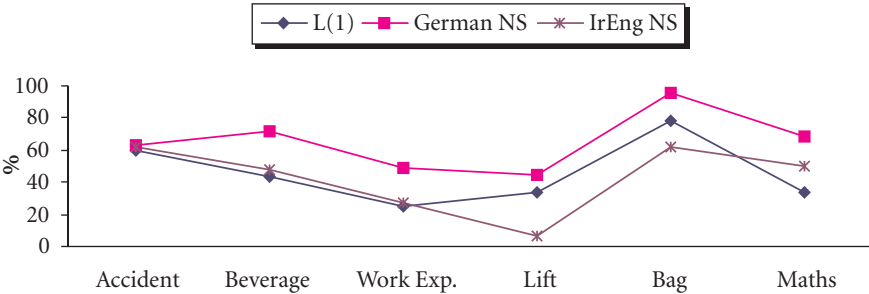


Figure 16. Frequency of downtoners as a proportion of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed over initial and first subsequent refusals.

Refusals of offers — Lexical and phrasal downgrader types — Development issues
Similar to the L(1) data, both learners and German NS use the same types of lexical and phrasal downgraders. The cajoler, absent in the learner data in L(1), is used in both L(2) and L(3).

The overall popularity of the downtoner decreases somewhat in L(2) and L(3), although it remains an important lexical and phrasal downgrader. In L(3), it is the lexical and phrasal downgrader employed most often in the accident, beverage and bag situations, and second most often in the work experience and maths situations (cf. Table A13–10, Appendix 13). As regards the actual levels of downtoners, we see

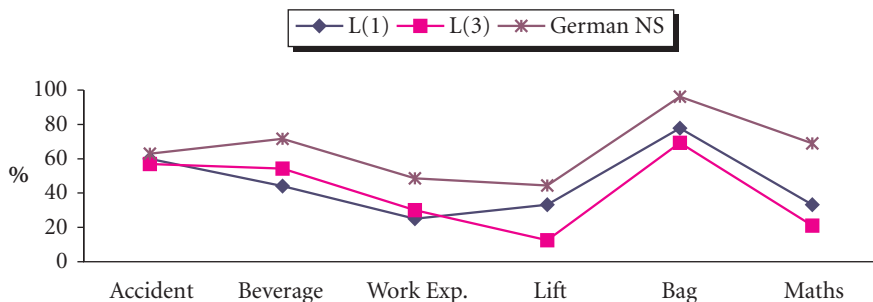


Figure 17. Frequency of downtoners as a proportion of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed over initial and first subsequent refusals — Developmental focus.

in Figure 17 that learner levels of downtoner use drop overall, e.g., in the lift, bag and maths situations, leading to lower levels overall relative to the German NS levels. Some situational variation is, however, evident — as, for instance, in the beverage situation, where levels increase over time. In general, however, the present learners employ other lexical and phrasal downgraders than the downtoner to a larger extent than in L(1).

Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?

Transfer — Lexical and phrasal downgrader types — Refusals — Initial analysis

It can be suggested that the L(1) preference for downtoners is influenced by the learners' native language in which the downtoner is also a popular lexical and phrasal downgrader. Although not preferred in all situations as was the case in the German NS data, the downtoner is the preferred lexical and phrasal downgrader in the accident, beverage, bag and maths situations in the IrEng NS data (cf. Table A13–10, Appendix 13). Indeed, the learners in L(1) employ the downtoner most in the first three of these four situations. As regards levels of use, the IrEng NS levels are similar to those of the learners' in the accident, beverage and work experience situations (cf. Figure 16); whereas positive transfer may be posited in the former situation, negative transfer is seen in the latter two situations, where the German NS levels of use surpass both the IrEng NS and L(1) levels.

Transfer — Lexical and phrasal downgrader types — Refusals — Development issues

A number of decreases recorded in learners' choice of the downtoner as a lexical and phrasal downgrader make the learner and IrEng NS data more similar. L(3) and IrEng NS downtoner levels are rather harmonious in all refusal of offer situations except the maths situation where learner levels drag behind (cf. Figure 18 and also Figure 16).

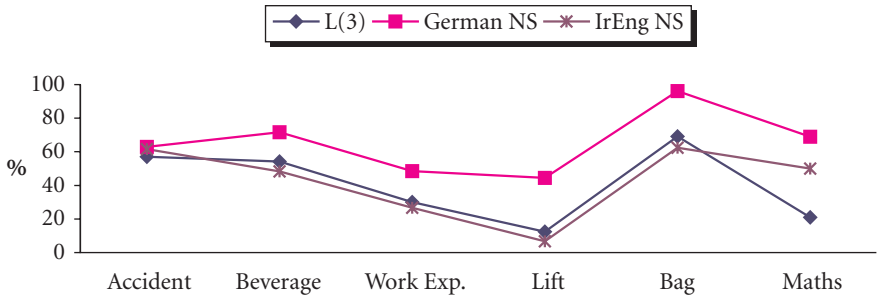


Figure 18. Frequency of downtoners as a proportion of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed over initial and first subsequent refusals — Focus on transfer.

5.3.2.2.2 *Requests*

Is there evidence of changes in learners’ L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the target speech community?

Requests — Lexical and phrasal downgrader types — Initial analysis

Despite the relative similarity recorded in the use of lexical and phrasal downgraders in general between the L(1) and German NS request data (cf. 5.3.2.1), the types of lexical and phrasal downgraders actually favoured reveal an important source of disparity.

In both the L(1) and German NS data, informants are found to employ the following lexical and phrasal downgraders with conventionally indirect request strategies: the politeness marker “*bitte*” (please), the downtoner, the understater and the subjectivizer (cf. Table A13–11, Appendix 13). Examples of the present learners’ use of the politeness marker “*bitte*” (please) include:

- (86) Drive, A21F:
Hallo Frau Müller. Ich heiße Peter und ... Könnte ich bitte mit ihnen nach Hause fahren?
(Drive, A21F (translation): Hello Frau Müller. My name is Peter and ... Could I please get a lift with you?)
- (87) Notes, A2F:
Judith, kann ich bitte deine Aufzeichnungen ausleihen, weil ...
(Notes, A2F (translation): Judith, can I borrow your notes, please because ...)

The relative appropriateness of the use of such lexical and phrasal downgraders in these and other instances is discussed below. Examples of the present learners’ use of the downtoner are the following:

- (88) Notes, A17F:

Judith, ich war vorgestern nicht im Seminar. kannst du mir vielleicht deine Aufzeichnungen ausleihen?

(Notes, A17F (translation): Judith, I wasn't in the department the day before yesterday. Can you maybe lend me your notes?)

- (89) Notes, A4F: *Tag Judith. Ich habe gesterns Seminar verpasst ... kann ich deine Aufzeichnungen davon mal haben.*

(Notes, A4F (translation): Hi, Judith. I missed yesterday's class ... er... can I have your notes from it)

While the modal sentence adverbial “*vielleicht*” appears in the first example, the mitigating modal particle, “*mal*” appears in the second.

The subjectivizer is only found in the L(1) data, not in the German NS data. However, its use is inappropriate by L2 standards, appearing in the following form:

- (90) Notes, A18F:

Hallo Judith, ich wundere mich, ob du mich deine Aufzeichnungen ausleihen könnte ...

(Notes, A18F (translation): Hello Judith, I wonder (am surprised) whether you could lend me your notes...).

Here, learner A18F attempts to transfer the pragmatic routine “I wonder whether” into German. Given the non-equivalence of this routine, she meets, however, with pragmatic failure (cf. 5.2.2.1 for an extensive discussion). In this example, it is nonetheless clear that although non-L2-like, the learner here is attempting to downgrade her utterance.

As regards the levels of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed, the politeness marker “*bitte*” (please) and the downtoner together account for the majority of downgraders employed by both the learners in L(1) and by the German NS as seen in the total values presented in Table 29.

Requests — Lexical and phrasal downgrader types — Development issues

Although present in L(2) as in L(1), learners' non-L2-like use of the subjectivizer has disappeared from the present learner data by L(3). Most insightful is, however, learners' use of the politeness marker “*bitte*” (please) and the downtoner. Similar to the German NS' and the present learners' use of lexical and phrasal downgraders in L(1), a large number of the lexical and phrasal downgraders used by learners in time L(2) and L(3) can, as seen in Table 29, be accounted for by these two lexical and phrasal downgrader types. In the notes and drive situations in L(3), for example, the politeness marker “*bitte*” (please) and the downtoner are the only lexical and phrasal downgraders employed.

Over time spent in the target speech community, however, fundamental changes are seen to occur in the relative importance placed by learners on these two lexical and phrasal downgraders employed in requests — their choices becoming

Table 29. Frequency of lexical and phrasal downgrader types with conventionally indirect head act strategies in non-standard request situations — Developmental focus

		Notes	Drive	Telephone	Grammar
L(1)	% CI	100	97	52.9	82.4
	% L&PD	60.6	34.4	88.9	64.3
	% “bitte” (please)	47.6	30.8	63.6	36.4
	% Downtoner	38.1	53.8	18.2	36.4
	% Total “bitte” + downtoner	85.7	84.6	81.8	72.8
L(2)	% CI	93.8	90.6	37.5	76.7
	% L&PD	56.7	41.4	66.7	82.6
	% “bitte” (please)	55.6	33.3	27.3	40.9
	% Downtoner	38.9	50	18.2	40.9
	% Total “bitte” + downtoner	94.5	83.3	45.5	81.8
L(3)	% CI	87.9	87.9	39.4	78.8
	% L&PD	55.2	37.9	84.6	65.4
	% “bitte” (please)	29.4	18.2	15.4	26.3
	% Downtoner	70.6	81.8	38.5	36.8
	% Total “bitte” + downtoner	100	100	53.9	63.1
German NS	% CI	93.3	90	63.3	75.9
	% L&PD	53.6	63	84.2	68.2
	% “bitte” (please)	27.8	—	5.3	5.9
	% Downtoner	72.2	88.9	73.7	58.8
	% Total “bitte” + downtoner	100	88.9	79	64.7

more L2-like with time. We shall examine the downtoner and the politeness marker “bitte” (please) in turn.

Politeness marker “bitte” (please) — Initial analysis

Prior to the year abroad, the learners use the politeness marker “bitte” (please) more than the German NS. This politeness marker is the preferred lexical and phrasal downgrader in the learner data in the notes and telephone situations — and the joint preferred downgrader with the downtoner in the grammar situation. In the German NS data, in contrast, “bitte” (please) is only employed to a very limited extent — and not even in all situations, being omitted in the drive situation, for instance (cf. Figure 19). In other words, prior to the year abroad, learners over-generalise their use of the politeness marker “bitte” (please) in all four request situations under analysis.

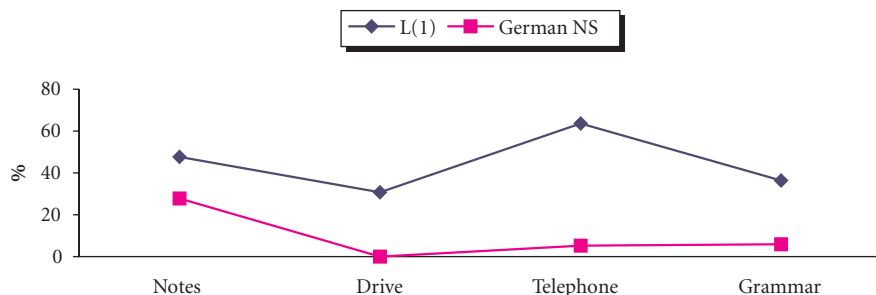


Figure 19. Frequency of the politeness marker “*bitte*” (please) as a proportion of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed with conventionally indirect request strategies in non-standard situations.

Politeness marker “bitte” (please) — Development issues

With time in the target speech community, there is a clear decrease in the over-generalisation of the politeness marker “*bitte*” (please) from the L(1) learner data, representing a considerable development towards the German NS norm in all four non-standard request situations under analysis (cf. Figure 20, cf. also Table A13–11, Appendix 13). The low German NS level for employment of “*bitte*” (please) is, however, only reached in the notes situation.

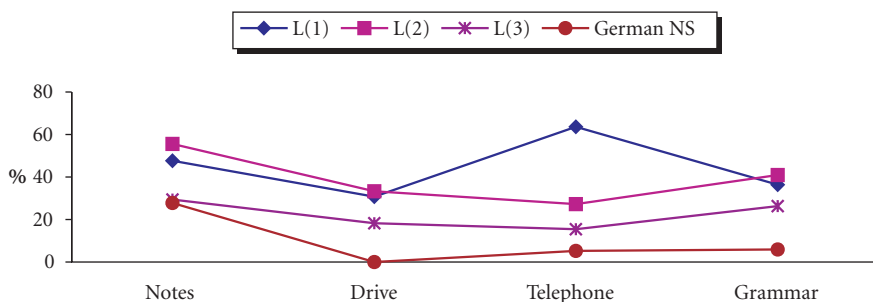


Figure 20. Frequency of the politeness marker “*bitte*” (please) as a proportion of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed with conventionally indirect request strategies in non-standard situations — Developmental focus.

Position of “bitte”/“please” — Initial analysis

In addition to differences between the data of the present Irish learners of German and the German NS regarding the frequency of employment of “*bitte*” (please), the manner of use also reflects some interlanguage features.

As can be clearly seen from Table 30, which shows the positions taken by those “*bitte*”/“*please*” which appear as lexical and phrasal downgraders with conventionally

Table 30. Position of the lexical and phrasal downgrader “*bitte*”/“please” with conventionally indirect head act strategies in non-standard request situations

	Situation	Notes	Drive	Telephone	Grammar
L(1)	% “ <i>bitte</i> ”	47.6	30.8	63.6	36.4
	% Initial	—	—	—	—
	% Embedded	40	33.3	85.7	75
	% Final	60	66.7	14.3	25
German NS	% “ <i>bitte</i> ”	27.8	—	5.3	5.9
	% Initial	—	—	—	—
	% Embedded	100	—	100	100
	% Final	—	—	—	—
IrEng NS	% “please”	11.1	—	—	25
	% Initial	—	—	—	—
	% Embedded	—	—	—	60
	% Final	100	—	—	40

indirect head act strategies in the four non-standard situations under analysis, “*bitte*” (please) occurs in all situations in the L(1) data in both the embedded and final position.

An example of learners’ use of “*bitte*” in final position with a conventionally indirect head act strategy is:

- (91) Notes, A5F:
Gestern war ich nicht im Seminar und ich bekam keine Aufzeichnungen. konnte ich deine Aufzeichnungen haben bitte?
(Notes, A5F, translation: I wasn’t in the department yesterday and I didn’t get any notes. Could I have your notes, please?)

In contrast, “*bitte*” (please) is embedded in all situations where this politeness marker occurs in the German NS data. Indeed, in the present dataset, over all situations and all head act strategies, it is only in the standard police situation that German NS use this politeness marker in any position other than in an embedded position (cf. Table 31). In the police situation, “*bitte*” (please) also appears in initial position in which case it serves to accentuate the illocutionary force of the marker (cf. also Aijmer 1996: 168).¹⁸ However, even in this situation, use of “*bitte*” (please) in initial position is restricted to the simultaneous employment of a mood derivable head act strategy. In no case in the present data does “*bitte*” (please) occur in final position in the German NS data.

A major caveat to the present analysis is the fact that “*bitte*”/“please” does not occur frequently in either the present IrEng NS or German NS data in the non-standard situations under analysis. However, this difficulty can be offset by

Table 31. Position of the lexical and phrasal downgrader “*bitte*”/“please” in standard and non-standard situations — Developmental focus

	Situation	Kitchen	Notes	Drive	Police	Teleph.	Gram	Applic.	Pres.
L(1)	% L&PD	46.9	60.6	33.3	34.5	88.2	52.9	93.7	16.7
	% “ <i>bitte</i> ”	68.7	47.6	30.8	80	45	36.4	75	–
	% Initial	9.1	–	–	25	–	–	–	–
	% Embedded	63.6	40	33.3	50	77.8	75	81.8	–
	% Final	27.3	60	66.7	25	22.2	25	18.2	–
L(2)	% L&PD	46.9	56.2	37.5	25.8	65.6	73.3	59.4	16.7
	% “ <i>bitte</i> ”	87.5	57.9	33.3	70	13	36	90	20
	% Initial	7.1	–	–	14.3	–	–	–	–
	% Embedded	57.1	50	25	57.1	33.3	66.7	64.7	100
	% Final	35.7	50	75	28.6	66.7	33.3	35.3	–
L(3)	% L&PD	57.6	57.6	39.4	24.2	84.8	60.6	43.7	31
	% “ <i>bitte</i> ”	66.7	35	15.4	54.5	10.3	25	92.9	22.2
	% Initial	14.3	–	–	16.7	–	–	–	–
	% Embedded	57.1	57.1	50	83.3	66.7	80	92.3	50
	% Final	28.6	42.9	50	–	33.3	20	7.7	50
German NS	% L&PD	60	53.3	63.3	50	90	62.1	50	76.7
	% “ <i>bitte</i> ”	50	29.4	–	100	3.4	5	53.3	–
	% Initial	–	–	–	46.7	–	–	–	–
	% Embedded	100	100	–	53.3	100	100	100	–
	% Final	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
IrEng NS	% L&PD	40.7	59.3	74.1	73.1	62.5	68.2	95.7	55
	% “please”	54.5	11.1	–	68.2	5	22.7	30.4	5.9
	% Initial	20	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	% Embedded	60	–	–	80	–	60	42.9	–
	% Final	20	100	–	20	100	40	57.1	100

including standard situations in the analysis. In such situations, this politeness marker is namely employed by NS of both German and Irish English with impositives and conventionally indirect head act strategies. As seen in Table 31, where all head act strategies are taken together, “*bitte*”/“please” is employed most in the three standard — kitchen, police and application form — situations in the German NS data, and indeed also in the IrEng NS data.

In contrast to the German NS data, where, as Figure 21 reveals, “*bitte*” (please) is employed in an embedded position in all situations of use (with the exception of the police situation), we see in Figure 22 that in the learner data in L(1), “*bitte*” (please) is found in all three positions, although only in initial position in the police

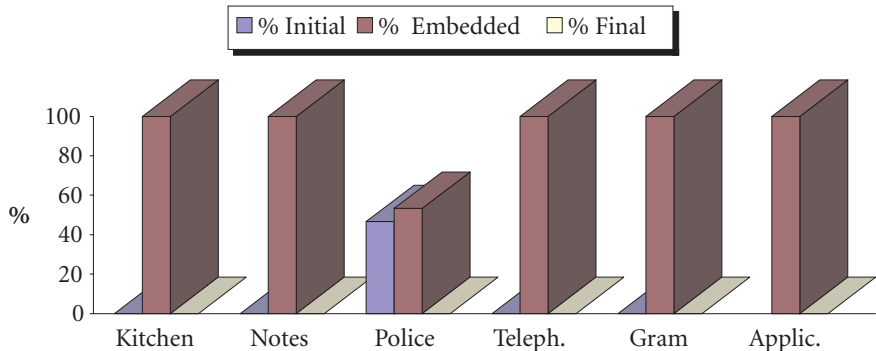


Figure 21. Position of “bitte” (please) in standard and non-standard situations in the German NS request data.

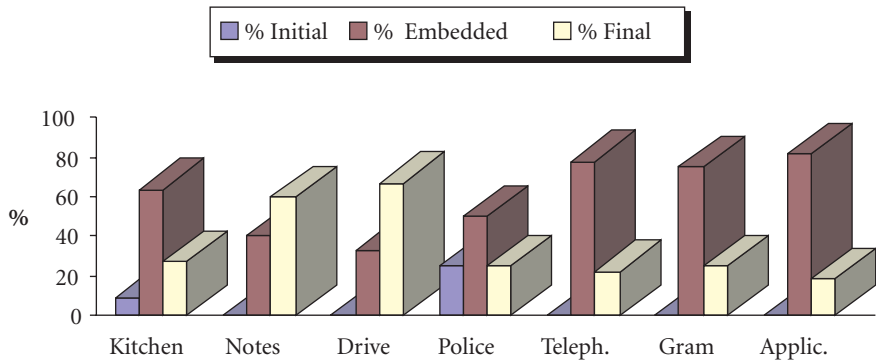


Figure 22. Position of “bitte” (please) in standard and non-standard situations in learners’ request data prior to the year abroad.

and kitchen situations, i.e., in the most standard situations — and here to only a small extent (cf. also Table 31). It is learners’ use of “bitte” (please) in final position which is the most noteworthy learner-specific feature here — as in the analysis of the non-standard situations above. Indeed, in every situation in which “bitte” (please) is found in the L(1) data, it is found to some degree in final position.

Having established learner/German NS differences in this regard, the next question relates to the communicative effect of this learner-specific use of this politeness marker in German given that it has been suggested that the use of “bitte” (please) in final position may lead to incidences of learner pragmatic failure (cf. Blum-Kulka 1991: 265). Comments by German NS upon being questioned on the issue of the position of “bitte” (please) include “Es hört sich eher wie ein Befehl an” (It sounds more like an order), “Es ist wie nachgeschoben, als ob es einem plötzlich

einfällt, man müsste höflich sein ... die Aufforderung wirkt dadurch stärker” (It’s as if it’s an after-thought, as if it suddenly occurred to the person that s/he should be polite ... it makes the request more emphatic), *„sehr höflich*” (very polite) and finally *„sehr formell*” (very formal). Pragmatic failure, therefore, appears possible.

Position of “bitte” (please) — Development issues

Table 31 shows that developments do occur with regard to the position of *“bitte”* (please) in both standard and non-standard situations over all head act strategies but that these are rather complex. In the five of seven situations under analysis in which this politeness marker was employed in L(1) and L(2) — the kitchen, drive, telephone, grammar and application form situations — it appears less often in the embedded position in L(2) than was the case in L(1), representing a move away from the German NS norm. In L(3), however, there was an increase in use of *“bitte”* (please) in an embedded position in six of the situations in which it was employed in L(2) and L(3). Indeed, in five (notes, drive, police, grammar, application) of the seven situations in which this politeness marker was employed in L(1) and in L(3), the level of embedded *“bitte”* (please) has increased over time — a movement towards the German NS norm.

Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?

Transfer, politeness marker — Initial analysis

As far as the high frequency with which learners use the politeness marker is concerned, transfer from Irish English cannot be proposed as an explanation as seen in Table A13–11, Appendix 13. Indeed, this politeness marker only occurs in two of the four situations under analysis in the IrEng NS request data with conventionally indirect head act strategies — and even in these situations to a low extent.

In contrast, the differences between the German NS’ and the present learners’ actual employment of the politeness marker *“bitte”* (please) in L(1) seem to relate at least in part to negative transfer from the L1. In contrast to the German NS data, but similar to the L(1) data, “please” is used in final position in the IrEng NS data (cf. Table 31). Indeed, in Irish English, “please” may appear in initial or final position or be embedded as the following examples illustrate:

- (92) Kitchen, E9F:
Please tidy the kitchen before my friends come.
- (93) Kitchen, E11F:
So could you please clean the kitchen
- (94) Notes, E10F:
Ciara I missed yesterday’s class could I borrow your notes please

Similar to the German NS data mentioned above, “please” occurs very rarely in initial position in the IrEng NS data. Indeed, given that its illocutionary force is accentuated when used in this position (cf. also Aijmer 1996: 168), it is not surprising that its use is restricted to standard situations only — here the kitchen situation — and even there it is used rarely (cf. Table 31). Indeed, even in this standard situation, “please”, in this position, creates the impression that the speaker is begging for compliance, triggering child-like connotations as in the example given here. Consequently, it may be suggested that learners’ limited use of “*bitte*” (please) in initial position may stem from L1 conventions.

Transfer, politeness marker — Development issues

As far as the levels of “*bitte*” (please) are concerned, transfer from Irish English continues to have no explanatory power in L(3) as in L(1). Although learner levels of politeness marker employment with a conventionally indirect head act strategy move towards the low L1 levels over time in the target speech community, they reach L1 levels only in the grammar situation. In the three remaining situations, learner levels remain higher.

A decrease in negative transfer is recorded with the decreases found in learners’ use of “*bitte*” (please) in final position over time.

Downtoners — Initial analysis

In the German NS data, the downtoner is the preferred lexical and phrasal downgrader in all four request situations under analysis with conventionally indirect head act strategies (cf. Table A13–11, Appendix 13). In contrast to the L(1) realisations of refusals of offers, however, L(1) levels of downtoners with requests are considerably lower than those of the German NS, with the downtoner the favoured lexical and phrasal downgrader only in the drive situation in the L(1) data. As regards the levels of downtoners employed, the German NS use more downtoners than the learners in L(1) in all four situations under analysis (cf. Figure 23).

Downtoner — Development issues

Table A13–11, Appendix 13 and, more particularly, Figure 24, illustrate that the low employment of downtoners recorded in the present learners’ pragmatic competence in L(1) requests increases to develop towards the L2 norm over time, unlike the case of refusals of offers. Increases were in fact found in three of the four non-standard situations, although the L2 norm is only actually reached in the notes situation. Only in the grammar situation is there no L2-like development; however, as learners’ use of downtoners in this situation was nearest to the German NS norm prior to the year abroad, scope for development in the other situations was greater. Development towards German NS levels in those situations where development is found is rather slow — occurring only in L(3).

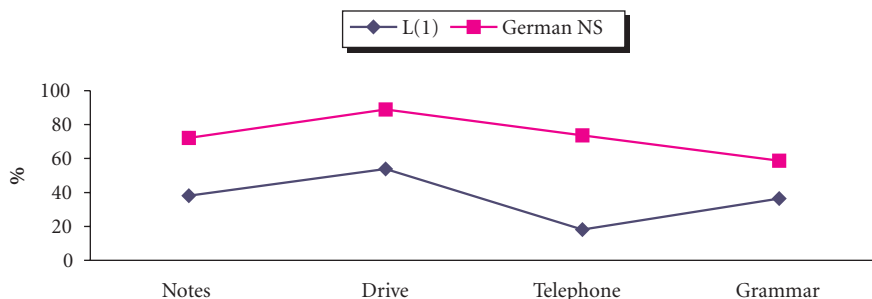


Figure 23. Frequency of downtoners as a proportion of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed with conventionally indirect head act strategies in non-standard request situations.

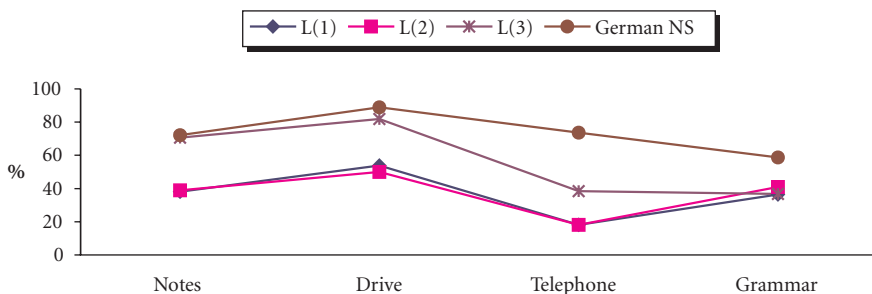


Figure 24. Frequency of downtoners as a proportion of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed with conventionally indirect head act strategies in non-standard request situations — Developmental focus.

Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?

Transfer — Downtoner — Initial analysis

As far as the IrEng NS downtoner levels are concerned, there is considerably less reliance on downtoners in requests in Irish English than in German (cf. Table A13–11, Appendix 13). Indeed, the present IrEng NS downtoner levels are less than those of the learners in L(1) in every situation.

Transfer — Downtoner — Development issues

The increases recorded in the present learners' use of downtoners over time spent in the target speech community indicate a clear decrease in any role that transfer may have played in constraining their L(1) utterances (cf. Table A13–11, Appendix 13 for details).

What implications do any changes or lack of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence have for our understanding of the development of L2 pragmatic competence?

The developments recorded over time spent in the target speech community in the present lexical and phrasal downgrading data as regards the frequency and types of downgraders employed point firstly to the effect of exposure to appropriate input on the development of L2 pragmatic knowledge — a stay in the target speech community, in contrast to the foreign language classroom experience, necessarily meaning exposure to L2 mitigators in their context of use. The second factor of importance is the far more extensive opportunity afforded learners for foreign language oral production in the study abroad context relative to the foreign language classroom. Such increased opportunities lead to an increased competence in learners' realisations of the basic speech acts. Consequently, learners are increasingly able to engage in more advanced modification, demanding a higher degree of processing capacity, without experiencing cognitive overload. Let us look now to evidence of the present learners' increased pragmatic knowledge and ability.

Firstly, the increases recorded in the frequency of the lexical and phrasal downgraders found in learners' refusals of offers and, to a lesser extent, in learners' requests over time are evidence of learners' increased procedural knowledge. They point to an increased control of the basic head act on the part of the present learners and a consequent higher ability to use modification.

Additional substantiation of the positive effect of the year abroad context for learners' processing capacity is seen in learners' employment of the politeness marker "*bitte*" (please). It appears that the extrasentential use of "*bitte*"/"please" is an interlanguage phenomenon, Blum-Kulka (1991:265) and Blum-Kulka/Levenston (1987:163) also reporting differences in the position occupied by "please" in utterances produced by native speakers and learners of Hebrew, where the learners were of different L1 backgrounds. It seems that "please" in final position represents a means of downgrading which is not cognitively demanding relative to other options, such as the downtoner, which is generally embedded. Its use, thus, demands a lower degree of pragmalinguistic competence. That the extrasentential use of this politeness marker recorded in L(1) in the present study decreased over time — being accompanied by an increase in its use in an embedded position — provides evidence for an increase in competence in this area. The fact that this development was slow is suggested to relate to a need on the part of learners for relief given possible cognitive overload in their realisations of requests (cf. 4.4.1.3.2 for details).

Finally, the analysis of the downtoner and of the politeness marker "*bitte*" (please) provided evidence both of learners' increased pragmatic ability and of their increased pragmatic knowledge. The downtoner has been shown to be a relatively

advanced type of lexical and phrasal downgrader. Faerch/Kasper (1989:234) note, for example, that Danish learners of both German and English tend to use less downtoners than German and English NS, despite a high frequency of modal particles in spoken Danish — a finding which rules out pragmatic transfer as a source of low employment of downtoners. Similarly, Trosborg (1995:260) found Danish learners of English of all levels of competence to use downtoners to a small extent only when realising requests. Finally, a low frequency of downtoner use among learners was also found by Weydt (1981), who investigated the use by native speakers and learners of German of the modal particles in a roleplay situation. Indeed, in the present study also, learners' use of downtoners prior to the year abroad was rather low in their request realisations in particular, but also in their refusals of offers, relative to the L2 norm. The politeness marker, on the other hand, has been found to be often overgeneralised by learners. Indeed, such a trend has been found by Faerch/Kasper (1989:232ff) in relation to Danish learners of German and English, for example; their learners were found to use this politeness marker more extensively than either group of native speakers in all situations when using the query preparatory head act strategy (ruling out transfer as an explanatory factor).¹⁹ Trosborg (1995:258 *passim*), however, did not observe the same trend in the utterances of Danish learners of English of any level.²⁰

It is suggested that the lower use of downtoners recorded in the present learners' request realisations prior to the year abroad and their overgeneralisation of the politeness marker were due on the one hand to a non-L2-like pragmatic knowledge stemming from a lack of appropriate input and on the other hand to deficiencies in pragmatic ability explained by insufficient opportunities of use (cf. 4.4.1.3.2 for a detailed discussion of such issues). The decreases in learners' use of the politeness marker and the increases recorded in their use of the downtoner with conventionally indirect request head act strategies over time in the second language context — a context which provides exposure to such mitigators in their context of use — are evidence of the importance of appropriate spoken input and opportunities of use in triggering developments in the area of pragmatic knowledge and pragmatic ability concerning L2 mitigation.

Can one speak of stages of acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence?

Two issues are to be addressed in the following. The first relates to the possibility that learners' level of L2 pragmatic competence may differ according to the speech act under analysis; the second concerns sequences of acquisition of lexical and phrasal downgrader types. Let us start with differences recorded in the mitigation used in requests and refusals of offers.

Differing speech acts, differing levels of competence

The present analysis of learners' use of lexical and phrasal downgrading in their realisations of requests and refusals of offers points to higher levels of competence in learners' requests. Consequently, it may be suggested that L2 competence in requests develops prior to that for refusals.

Such differences are seen, for instance, in the analysis of the frequency of lexical and phrasal downgrader use. Although German NS use more lexical and phrasal downgraders overall in both the request and the refusal of offer data than the learners in L(1), the gap between German NS and L(1) realisations is considerably larger in the refusal data. It appears that the learners in the request data are in a position to concentrate on such mitigation to a greater extent than is the case in realisations of refusals of offers. It is suggested that in realising refusals, learners are forced to concentrate their energies on employing the basic semantic strategies to realise a refusal of offer. The use of lexical and phrasal downgraders appears to fade in importance for learners as they employ a strategy of least effort. Such differences as those recorded in L(1) between lexical and phrasal downgrading in requests and refusals remain in L(3) despite some increases in the level of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed with refusals.

Unlike the above analysis which revealed a higher competence to be characteristic of the present learners' requests relative to their refusals of offers in the use of lexical and phrasal downgraders, the analysis of the actual downgrader types employed by learners appears rather to point to a higher L2 competence for learners' refusals relative to their requests in L(1), although this is not found in L(3). It is namely shown that in L(1), the downtoner, the lexical and phrasal downgrader preferred by German NS in request realisations, is employed to a considerably lower extent by learners than by German NS. Indeed, rather than the downtoner, the present learners in L(1) reveal a tendency to employ the politeness marker "*bitte*" (please) to a considerably larger degree in their requests than the German NS do in the L2 request data. In learners' realisations of refusals of offers, on the other hand, the present learners' choice of lexical and phrasal downgraders is rather L2-like prior to their stay in the target speech community. Specifically, in the refusal data, the most preferred/joint most preferred lexical and phrasal downgrader in five of the six situations in L(1) is the same as that lexical and phrasal downgrader favoured in all six situations in the German NS refusal data, i.e., the downtoner. It appears that the reason for this L2-like refusing behaviour is related to the lack of an easy mitigating option, such as the politeness marker "*bitte*" (please), when refusing. This downgrader is not commonly used in refusals in either the L1 or the L2, since its use increases the directness of a particular refusal and lends it a pleading quality (cf. 4.4.1.3.2 on the use of this politeness marker with refusals). Should learners wish to downgrade their refusals, the downtoner — although as discussed, difficult to employ — represents one of the primary options

available. It would seem, therefore, that it is only those learners with the most advanced pragmatic competence who employ lexical and phrasal downgraders in their realisations of refusals. Although there is no doubt that learners' inappropriate use of the politeness marker "*bitte*" (please) partly accounted for the higher degree of competence recorded in the use of lexical and phrasal downgraders in request realisations in L(1), this does not take from the fact that learners' L2 competence in requesting is superior to their competence in refusing in time L(3). Over time in the target speech community, learners' choice of lexical and phrasal downgrader type namely changes from an overgeneralisation of the politeness marker "*bitte*" (please) to an increasingly L2-like use of downtoners when requesting.

Possible reasons for the increased complexity of refusals appear to stem from the lack of an appropriate, explicit and syntactically "easy-to-use" lexical and phrasal downgrader, such as the politeness marker "*bitte*" (please) in request realisations. In addition, it is suggested that the increased complexity of refusals stems from their role as Contrasts in the exchange structure. Also, the higher competence in requesting may be due to learners' higher degree of familiarity with this speech act from their school experience in the foreign language setting — specifically in the form of information questions, such as "Can you tell me how to get to x?", "Can you send me information on x?", etc. Indeed, Bardovi-Harlig (1996:24) reports of an analysis of textbooks that requests are "...perhaps the easiest to find of all the speech acts or conversational functions". A final reason may be the formulaic nature of requesting strategies — in contrast to refusals of offers.

Development of lexical and phrasal downgraders

A developmental trend can be seen in the present learners' changing use of lexical and phrasal downgraders over time. It appears that learners first focus their energies on the basic lexical and syntactic elements of the particular language in order to somehow get their message across before they engage in mitigation. Even when modification begins to be employed, it is not every type of downgrader that learners use. The present increases and decreases in learners' use of downtoners and of "*bitte*" (please), respectively, over time are suggested to reflect advances in control of processing in line with the complexification hypothesis: in other words, control over structurally complex features follows that of structurally simple features. This supports findings noted in 3.2.3 concerning the fact that it is the politeness marker "*bitte*" / "please" which is the lexical and phrasal downgrader preferred by learners at first. Only gradually does the more complex downtoner start to appear.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

The objective of the present study was to provide some insight into the development of the L2 pragmatic competence of a group of thirty-three advanced Irish learners of German over a ten month “year abroad” period spent in the target speech community, Germany. This learner data — elicited at three times over the year abroad period — was analysed with reference to L2 data, gathered from thirty-four native speakers of German, and L1 data, elicited from twenty-seven native speakers of Irish English.

In 6.1, an overview is given of the major findings of the present study. However, needless to say, these findings can only be viewed against the limitations of this same study. It is these which are highlighted in 6.2. In 6.3, our attention turns to the practical implications of the present study and, finally in 6.4, a number of potentially fruitful future research questions are highlighted.

6.1 Summary of findings

The research questions which guided the present study were:

1. Is there evidence of changes in learners’ L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the target speech community?
2. Does pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?
3. What implications do any changes or lack of changes in learners’ L2 pragmatic competence have for our understanding of the development of L2 pragmatic competence?
4. Can one speak of stages of acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence?

It is to these same questions which we return in the present overview of the major findings of this study. In addition, some insights gained from the cross-cultural analysis of requests, offers and refusals of offers in German and Irish English are briefly summarised. Let us start with the first research question.

1. Was there evidence of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence towards or away from the L2 norm over time spent in the target speech community?

It is clear that an extended, but limited, sojourn in the target speech community cannot lead to L2 pragmatic competence. Nevertheless, this study revealed that exposure to second language input triggered some important developments in the present informants' L2 pragmatic competence in the investigated areas of discourse structure, pragmatic routines and internal modification. While many of these developments led to an increasingly L2-like pragmatic competence, the analysis also revealed that not all changes in learners' pragmatic knowledge or ability over the year abroad necessarily represented developments towards the L2 norm. In addition, in cases where movements towards the L2 norm was recorded, "towards" was indeed the appropriate word since it was rarely that the L2 norm was actually reached. In the following, the major changes observed in the present analysis, when such changes occurred, their relative importance and their relation to the L2 norm are outlined. Let us start with the first aspect of analysis, discourse structure.

Discourse structure

Over time in the target speech community, the discourse structure of offer-refusal of offer exchanges became increasingly L2-like, the number of complex exchanges of the form Initiate- n (Contra)-Satisfy, where $n > 1$, decreasing in favour of simple exchanges of the exchange structure, Initiate-Contra-Satisfy. In other words, learners employed less reoffers at the end of their year abroad compared to prior to the year abroad. These L2-like developments took place quite early in the learners' year abroad — indeed, the changes in the FDCT data were evident after approximately two months in the L2-speech community. After this time, levels remained approximately stable overall. The changes in discourse structure represent an important development given that learners' use of an overly complex offer-refusal exchange structure prior to the year abroad held potential for pragmatic failure since the Irish learners' use of reoffers may have led native speakers of German to feel they were being pressurised into doing something against their will. On the other hand, the lack of ritual reoffers in German may have caused Irish learners to feel that any offers made by native speakers of German were less than sincere. Despite, however, employing the structure of L2 exchanges overall to a greater extent, and indeed reflecting or approaching the L2 norm in a number of situations, the learners continued to reoffer to a larger extent than the German NS informants at the end of the year abroad (cf. 5.1).

Pragmatic routines

The second aspect of analysis, learners' use of pragmatic routines, revealed an overall increase in learners' reliance on pragmatic routines over time spent in the target speech community. This finding can be welcomed since use of such routines leads to an increase in L2 fluency, opens up membership to a particular speech community and leads to an increased efficiency in communication.

Other L2-like developments included a decrease in the use of non-L2-like, interlanguage-specific routines, such as "*Ich wundere mich,...*", a literal translation of "I wonder ..." — a pragmatic routine employed in requesting in Irish English. The same trend was recorded for "*Mir ist egal*" and "*Es ist mir egal*" — both employed inappropriately as off-the-hook refusal strategies in the early stages of the year abroad and disappearing by the end of the year abroad. Also, the use of "*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*" (Are you sure?), a pragmatic routine created by learners to realise a reoffer in the early stages of the year abroad, decreased over time although this development was primarily linked to learners' increasingly L2-like discourse structure and, where reoffering continued to occur in L(3), learners' use of this learner-specific pragmatic routine actually increased — a non-L2-like development. Other developments involved a decrease in the non-L2 forms taken by the L2-like pragmatic routines employed by learners, such as the decrease in learners' use of "*Du bist/Sie sind sehr nett*" (You're very kind), where the hearer is directly addressed, and the increased use of the L2-like impersonal form: "*Das ist (aber) nett von Dir/Ihnen*" ((Oh), that's kind of you).

Although most of the increases recorded in learners' use of pragmatic routines were L2-like, there were, however, also instances where such was not the case due to an increase in creative use and false overgeneralisations — a finding which provides support for the non-linear developmental path noted in previous studies to be taken by pragmatic routines. The increase in learners' use of "*Kein Problem*" (No problem) as a Minimize where the expression of gratitude forms part of a refusal of an offer over time is one example. Indeed, increased use of this interlanguage routine meant an increase in potential pragmatic failure — German NS interpreting its use as an ironic comment or as a signal of the insincerity of a particular offer.

Other traces of such non-linear development include the fact that increases in the frequency of L2-like routines were not always accompanied by sociopragmatic competence. Indeed, both overgeneralisation and a low use of pragmatic routines, such as of "*Ich wollte fragen, ob...*" (I wanted to ask if/whether...)/"*Eine Frage...*" (One question:...) and "*Das ist (aber) nett (von Dir/Ihnen)*" ((Oh), that's kind of you) were recorded — these routines appearing to be employed in situations in which the learners *themselves* felt they were useful rather than in situations in which their use was appropriate from an L2 perspective.

Finally, the changes documented in the present datasets in relation to pragmatic routines were, generally, not recorded until L(3).

Syntactic downgrading

As far as the frequency of syntactic downgraders is concerned, changes did occur over time but these were comparatively minor and also situation-dependent for both offer and request realisations. Overall, despite some situational variation, levels were rather similar to the German NS norm both prior to and following the year abroad. However, the standard request situations represented an exception. In these situations, learners tended to downgrade syntactically to a far smaller extent than either the present German NS or IrEng NS. Over time, these differences in the request data remained. The continued lack of syntactic downgrading in these situations meant that the degree of face-threat associated with these situations was rather high, leaving the learners open to potential pragmatic failure.

As regards the complexity of the syntactic downgraders employed with the conventionally indirect head act offer and request strategies analysed, there was a clear gradual increase recorded in the direction of the German NS norm in all situations from L(1) to L(3) — with some few exceptions. In the case of offers, this development represented an increase in learners' L2 pragmatic competence given a more L2-like use of syntactic downgraders in L(3) relative to L(1). Overgeneralisation of syntactic complexity was, however, also noted — most particularly in the requesting data. This trend limited learners' L2 pragmatic competence somewhat — over-complexity namely tending to communicate a lack of self-confidence on the part of the speaker.

Lexical and phrasal downgrading

As far as the levels of lexical and phrasal downgraders are concerned, developments towards the L2 norm, although also recorded for the request data, were most notable in the refusal data. Indeed, given rather low levels of lexical and phrasal downgraders in all refusal situations investigated relative to the L2 norm prior to the year abroad, such increases were to be welcomed. L2 levels were not, however, reached in any refusal situation. Differences between the learner and L2 data also continued to exist in the L(3) request data. However, as in the L(1) data, the use of lexical and phrasal downgraders with requests was overall more L2-like than in the refusal of offer data.

With regard to the types of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed by learners, it was found that in realisations of refusals employment of downtoners — the lexical and phrasal downgraders preferred by the German NS and, indeed, also preferred or jointly preferred by the learners in the majority of situations in time

L(1) — decreased over time in a movement away from the L2 norm. Changes were also recorded in the request data. Here there was a substantial L2-like development in learners' selection of lexical and phrasal downgrader type with decreases in learners' preference for the politeness marker "*bitte*" (please), accompanied by an increase in their use of the downtoner, the lexical and phrasal downgrader preferred by German NS. Such changes were towards the end of their stay in the target speech community, i.e., in the L(3) data. German NS levels of downtoners and of this politeness marker were only reached in one situation, but there is no doubt that learners' choice of lexical and phrasal downgrader type was more L2-like in L(3) than in L(1). Further L2-like developments were noted in learners' use of "*bitte*" (please) — over time, rather than employing this politeness marker in final position as in L(1) or L(2), learners began to increasingly employ it in an embedded position in time L(3). Potential pragmatic failure resulting from an overly direct request was, thus, reduced. As in the above cases, development was, however, rather slow — being recorded only in L(3) — the L(2) data in this case representing a step backwards on the L(1) data.

2. Did pragmatic transfer increase or decrease with time in the target culture?

Changes recorded in the relative importance of transfer were found to be rather complex and it is impossible to say in general whether transfer increased or decreased over time. The present findings do, however, provide an insight into the factors which lead to increases or decreases in positive and negative pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer.

In general, findings lend support to previous research on transferability which predicts that whether a learner transfers a particular form or function depends largely on his/her views regarding its transferability, specifically in relation to psycholinguistic markedness. In the present study it was found namely that learners' developing metapragmatic knowledge affected their judgements regarding the relative specificity of certain pragmatic features to their L1 and L2 and so influenced their decision regarding the relative transferability of L1 conventions. The changing complexity of learners' offer-refusal exchanges represents a case in point. With time in the target speech community, learners namely began to perceive ritual reoffers to be specific to their L1. They consequently discontinued transferring the L1 offer-refusal exchange structure to their L2 to a large extent. Similarly, pragmatic routines used by learners which would have met with misunderstanding decreased in use — due, it is also suggested, to an increased understanding of their culture-specificity. Such findings lend substance to previous findings by Blum-Kulka/Olshtain (1986) who report decreases in pragmatic transfer with length of stay.

However, not all changes in perceptions of transferability represented welcome decreases in negative transfer. Indeed, non-salient input causing learners to mistakenly believe more strongly than prior to the year abroad in the transferability of the pragmatic routine “*Kein Problem*” used as a Minimize where the expression of gratitude forms part of a refusal of an offer is a case in point, its use increasing rather than decreasing with time. Such findings lend weight to recent research by Kondo (1997:283) who, as well as finding decreases in negative pragmatic transfer also found increases in negative transfer.

A further example of a less-than-positive effect of learners’ perceptions of transferability on the relative levels of transfer was the present informants’ observation of a higher level of directness of German NS’ use of language relative to the L1 norm — a perception which was strengthened during their sojourn in the second language context. This perception is suggested to have caused inappropriate non-transfer of syntactic downgraders in learners’ standard requests with conventionally indirect head act strategies at all times during their year abroad.

Apart from perceptions of language specificity, a further relevant factor influencing changes in the amount of transfer recorded over time in the present study was found to be the effect of increasing pragmatic ability. However, here too, the final effect was variable. The gradual L1- and L2-like increases recorded in the complexity of the syntactic downgraders used with conventionally indirect offer strategies, for example, represented a general increase in positive transfer. Similar L1-like increases in complexity in the request data resulted, however, in negative transfer given the overcomplexity of learners’ syntactic downgrading at the end of the year abroad. In addition, the decreases in learners’ use of “*bitte*” (please) in final position — also the result of an increase in pragmatic ability — represented a decrease in negative pragmalinguistic transfer.

A final factor found to influence the degree to which learners engaged in transfer from the L1 was the learner’s desire to transfer. In other words, and, as is mentioned in more detail below (cf. question 3 below, The question of the L2 norm), learners may simply prefer the L1 norm and choose to adhere to this rather than to adopt a foreign L2 convention. The present analysis of the offer/refusal discourse structure is a case in point.

So far, we have concentrated on transfer from the present learners’ L1, Irish English, to their interlanguage, German. However, in the retrospective data analysed in the present study, there is also evidence of the transfer of L2 pragmatic norms to the L1, one learner reporting her failure to engage in ritual refusals upon a visit home during her year abroad — and the consequences which this had.

3. What implications do any changes or lack of changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence have for our understanding of the development of L2 pragmatic competence?

The present study provides some insights into the development of L2 pragmatic competence, the role of input in this process and also the question of the appropriateness of an L2 norm.

Development of L2 pragmatic competence

Firstly, the findings provide some support for the information processing model of pragmatic acquisition proposed by Bialystok (1993). Evidence of Bialystok's claim that adult learners rely heavily on their L1 representations of pragmatic knowledge is seen, for example, in learners' recourse to universal knowledge in their use of internal modification and, indeed, also pragmatic routines. In addition, a further example of such dependence on L1 representations is found in learners' pragmatic transfer of their use of ritual reoffers. Although such transfer is often positive, it is negative in this case.

The major challenge facing learners in the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence is, according to Bialystok, to gain control over processing. The present study reveals that this is indeed an important component of the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence. Indeed, the second language context provides an ideal opportunity for this process, learners' pragmatic ability increasing and more processing capacity being freed over time, allowing learners to increasingly employ more complex structures. Such developments in procedural knowledge were seen in the increased frequency with which learners employed pragmatic routines, in the increased complexity of the syntactic downgraders they employed in both their realisations of offers and requests with conventionally indirect head act strategies, in the rise in lexical and phrasal downgrading levels employed by learners in refusals of offers and in the movement from their use of the easy-to-use politeness marker "*bitte*" (please) in request realisations to the downtoner, a more complex lexical and phrasal downgrader. Other developments include the increased use of "*bitte*" (please) in an embedded position rather than in final position. Practice was the key to such developments. Unfortunately, however, although practice does improve the speed and efficiency with which pragmatic knowledge can be accessed, we cannot say that practice makes perfect. Although the levels of lexical and phrasal downgrading employed by learners in their refusals of offers increased over time, for example, they remained overall considerably lower than German NS levels, as indeed did learner levels of downtoners and of the politeness marker "*bitte*" (please).

Bialystok recognises that pragmatic knowledge must be acquired by learners. However, she sees this as a minor task only. In the present study, it is apparent that

pragmatic knowledge may not be as simple to acquire as Bialystok assumes and, logically, it is not enough to gain control over pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatic knowledge, if the knowledge itself is incorrect — as is the case in a number of instances in the present study. Learners' use of the pragmatic routine "*Kein Problem*" as a Minimize where the expression of gratitude is a semantic strategy to refuse an offer represents one example of an incorrect L2 form-function match. Control over this pragmatic routine increases over time in the target speech community, as also does the potential pragmatic failure to which learners are exposed. In addition, the improvements recorded in learners' ability to access more complex constructions, although to be welcomed, may have a less than positive communicative effect, if they are not accompanied by the necessary knowledge of the distributional frequency of such constructions, i.e., by sociopragmatic competence. Such competence was seen to be lacking in particular in learners' overgeneralisation of complex syntactic downgraders with conventionally indirect request strategies at the end of the year abroad.

The question of the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge leads us to a further approach to language acquisition, namely to Swain's (1995) Output Hypothesis. In the present study this hypothesis was supported in the disappearance of or reduction in the use of a number of non-L2-like pragmatic routines, which had been "created" and used by learners prior to the year abroad due to a mistaken belief in the transferability of either or both their L1 illocutionary potential and semantic content. The learner-specific forms "*Ich wundere mich*", a literal translation of "I wonder...", "*Bist Du/Sind Sie sicher?*" as a pragmatic routine, similar to the Irish English routine "Are you sure?", and the inappropriately intimate perspective employed in the use of "*Das ist (aber) nett von Dir/Ihnen*" ((Oh), that's kind of you) are examples. The decrease in their use is suggested to be explained by feedback received by learners on the pragmatic failure and misunderstanding which employment of these routines necessarily triggered.

Apart from negative feedback resulting from learner output, the L2 input itself provided noticing opportunities for the development of pragmatic competence. Critical incidents were found to play a part in this regard. Via such incidents, learners were found to be forced to notice and understand "gaps" between the linguistic forms, pragmalinguistic functions and sociopragmatic constraints of the target L2 and those of their own interlanguage. The L2-like decreases in complex offer-refusal exchanges at a rather early stage in the students' sojourn and the accompanying metapragmatic data serve to illustrate this point. Such data lend support to Schmidt's (1993) noticing hypothesis of pragmatic development, as do data relating to the increased frequency with which learners used pragmatic routines since this latter development was suggested to be due to learners noticing the repeated use of such routines in their input, and indeed also the efficiency of their use.

Negative evidence was not as forthcoming nor were gaps between learners'

interlanguage and their L2 input as obvious in all cases in the study abroad input. Indeed, where such a gap between learners' IL and the L2 was not identified, and where negative evidence was absent, a decrease in pragmatic competence was a possible consequence. Such was the case with the pragmatic routine "*Kein Problem*" used to minimize an expression of gratitude employed in a realisation of a refusal. Learners' use of this IL-specific routine increased over time due to their increased ability to access routines and, it is also suggested, to the appearance of "*Kein Problem*" in their second language input with a variety of illocutionary forces.

Most difficulties experienced by learners in "noticing the gap" were, however, related to their L2 sociopragmatic competence rather than to their pragmalinguistic competence. In some cases, no gap appeared to have been noticed, whereas in other situations, differences observed were not understood. In both cases, negative evidence appears to have been lacking. Non-L2-like utterances were the result. An example of the difficulties where no gap was noticed is found in learners' use of the pragmatic routines "*Ich wollte fragen, ob...*" (I wanted to ask, if/whether...)/"*Eine Frage:...*" (One question:...) and "*Das ist (aber) nett (von Dir/Ihnen)*" (Oh, that's kind (of you)). Here in a number of situations, most particularly in the case of the former routine, situational constellations were not observed and the routines appear to have been employed where the learners *themselves* deemed appropriate. On the other hand, a lack of understanding is recorded in the lack of syntactic mitigation employed in the present standard request situations. Learners, in this case, were aware of a relatively higher degree of directness employed in the use of the German language relative to the L1 norm — an awareness, which increased over time. They did not, however, appear to understand the gap fully and inappropriately withheld syntactic mitigation at all times during their year abroad.

The order in which pragmatic control over various elements of pragmatic knowledge is acquired is the final aspect of the process of the development of L2 pragmatic competence to be discussed here. In this regard, the present study provides evidence of the applicability of the complexification hypothesis. It appears namely that structures which are easier to use become automated prior to more complex structures and, therefore, that L2 grammatical competence constricts the development of L2 pragmatic competence. This is seen in learners' clear preference for structurally simple forms of mitigation over complex forms as revealed in their preference for the politeness marker "*bitte*" (please) over the downtoner in their request realisations prior to the year abroad, in their employment of less complex syntactic downgraders with conventionally indirect head act offer and request strategies — relative to the L2 norm — and in their use of "*bitte*" (please) in final position rather than in an embedded position. Further evidence for this hypothesis is seen in learners' avoidance of internal mitigation on occasion, as in the case of the low levels of use of lexical and phrasal downgraders with refusals prior to the year abroad. In such cases, it appears that the processing effort of employing mitigation

or complex mitigation is too large and learners engage in overgeneralisation to reduce this load. As control increases over time spent in the target speech community, learners appear freer to engage in more modification, as indeed also found by Trosborg (1995:430). Structurally more complex forms also begin to be employed increasingly — as, seen for instance, in the increases recorded in learners' use of the downtoner over "*bitte*" (please) in their requests, in their use of syntactically more complex syntactic downgraders in their offer and request realisations, in the increased use of "*bitte*" (please) in an embedded position and in their increases in the use of internal modification in realisations of refusals.

Role of input in the development of L2 pragmatic competence

The present study provides evidence for a positive effect of second language input on the development of L2 pragmatic competence. There is no doubt that learners' L2 pragmatic competence — both knowledge and ability — does develop over time spent in the target speech community. This is seen in learners' more L2-like discourse structure of their offer-refusal exchanges, in their increased use and, indeed, overall more L2-like use, of pragmatic routines and finally in the frequency and choice of the internal mitigation used over time spent in the target speech community. Indeed, the present findings relating to the type of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed refute Weydt's (1981) findings (cf. 3.3.2.1.2), as they reveal that exposure to spoken input does lead to a higher degree of competence in realising the interpersonal function of language.

While an increased control over processing is the result of the extensive opportunities available to practice use of the target language — enabling informants to become more adept at retrieving and using their sociopragmatic and pragma-linguistic knowledge — noticing opportunities and negative evidence are proposed to relate to the development of L2 pragmatic knowledge.

However, in line with previous research findings (cf. 3.3.2.2), it is clear that salient input is not always available even in the target language speech community, leading to a situation where learners often do not notice gaps between their IL productions and those of native speakers of the L2. In some cases, as in the case of the pragmatic routine "*Kein Problem*" as a Minimize where the expression of gratitude forms part of a refusal of an offer, input may mislead learners; in other cases, learners, in the absence of input to the contrary, simply assume universality. Based on the findings of the present study discussed above, it appears that the latter is particularly the case where sociopragmatic judgements are concerned. Meta-pragmatic input on pragmatic failure in this area is rare given the close relationship with learners' social judgements. In other words, the difficulty with second language input appears to lie in its lack of saliency. Learners, where they are forced to notice a gap between their IL productions and the L2 input have a chance of growing in its

understanding. However, where input remains implicit, learners presume they are doing the right thing, and so continue along this path.

In the analysis of pragmatic routines, it was also suggested that frequency of input was possibly an important factor in explaining why use of some pragmatic routines, such as *“Es geht schon”*, increased while others, such as *“Ich schaff das schon”* (I’ll manage all right), also realising an off-the-hook refusal strategy, did not.

The question of the L2 norm

Although “noticing the gap” and using the L2 are important pre-requisites for the development of L2 pragmatic competence, they are by no means the only pre-requisites, as revealed in the metapragmatic data elicited within the framework of the present study. Indeed, in a number of instances, this data highlights learners’ rejection of the L2 pragmatic norm in favour of their L1 norm. This evidence, in heightening learners’ possible rejection of L2 pragmatic conventions, provides support for the recent attention drawn to the possible inappropriateness of the L2 norm as a measure of learners’ L2 pragmatic competence (cf. 3.4.2).

The analysis of the discourse structure of offer-refusal exchanges is one such case in point. Although the metapragmatic data elicited showed that the majority of learners who commented on differences in offer-refusal exchange structures in the L1 and L2 favoured the L2 norm in their use of German, a number of learners clearly stated their rejection of this norm in favour of the L1 norm despite displaying an awareness of the “gap”. These learners continued to prefer to engage in ritual reoffers and refusals — viewing them as “polite”. These metapragmatic comments were supported by the FDCT data.

In addition, the analysis of syntactic downgraders employed with conventionally indirect request strategies suggested that non-transfer of syntactic downgraders in the standard situations investigated related to learners’ perception of the higher degree of directness in L2 speakers’ use of the German language. However, in the non-standard situations, levels of syntactic downgrading were considerably higher than in the standard situations. Levels of complexity also increased over time in these situations unlike the case of the standard application form situation where complexity levels decreased. It is suggested that such differences in the use of syntactic downgrading in the present standard and non-standard situations are due to the fact that standard situations are more suited to “trying out” a higher degree of directness given the speaker’s right to pose the request and the interactants’ obligation to comply. In non-standard situations, in contrast, learners may be fearful of risking a lack of compliance and appearing impolite, if they sacrifice the degree to which they use syntactic downgrading in their L1 somewhat.

Indeed, this interpretation that learners’ desire to remain “polite” is a major reason for their rejection of (their perception of) L2 norms on occasion is supported by

metapragmatic data from the post-year abroad questionnaire. Learners were, for example, asked on this questionnaire whether they, if they see differences in the politeness norms adopted by German and Irish NS, feel it necessary for them as second language learners of German to adopt the German direct or indirect way. They gave the following replies: 48.3%: yes, 51.7%: no. Those who recognised a need to adapt explained their reasoning with regard to the increased ease which adoption of the L2 norm brings to the process of integration (A23F) or, more often, with regard to the fact that not adopting this norm causes possible instances of pragmalinguistic failure (e.g., comments (96)–(99)).

- (95) A23F:
Necessary, because although you're Irish its no harm to adopt German ways in order to settle in.
- (96) A22F:
If you don't people will have difficulty in understanding you.
- (97) C1F:
When speaking to Germans I think that it is necessary to adopt the same kind of mentality, otherwise they may not totally understand what you mean or are looking for.
- (98) C6M:
I think that perhaps because German is a more direct language in speaking terms, I have to be more direct with questions, even when I don't want to.
- (99) C5M:
If directness is what they understand, you have to cater for that and act accordingly.

Indeed, comments (95)–(99) show that these learners do not view adoption of the L2 norm as a choice, but rather as a necessity. Such comments echo the learners' views presented earlier in 5.1 in relation to possible misunderstandings which may ensue in offering and refusing.

On the other hand, however, those learners who did not see a necessity for adoption of the L2 norm substantiated their view with comments relating to personality and identity — supporting the above hypothesis that maintenance of one's own personality and identity is a major reason for learners' possible rejection of L2 norms. Comments included:

- (100) C7F:
At 21 years, I've developed my personality and nature and I don't believe I should have to become direct/more abrupt when speaking a foreign language. I don't want to be German — I want people to still notice that I'm Irish.
- (101) A1F:
No, I don't think it should be expected of me to change personality wise.

(102) A13F:

The 'politeness' that I have learned to date is nothing to do with the language I speak. It is part of my personality therefore I do not feel that I have to change personally to improve my German.

It is clear that many of these individuals associate language use with an individual's personality and identity rather than with the foreign language itself. They are happy with their personalities and do not see any reason to change. Learner A4F is somewhat different in this regard. She comments:

(103) A4F:

Learning a language does entail learning the culture that goes with it but personally I prefer Irish attitudes and I don't want to change that.

Despite recognising the relationship between language and culture, she clearly still prefers to retain her L1 preferences of language use.

4. Can one speak of stages of acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence?

Although no detailed order of development of L2 pragmatic competence can be posited on the basis of the data elicited in the present study alone, the findings discussed add to the existing research body on possible stages of acquisition as regards the various components of pragmatic competence and as regards the relative ease or difficulty with which various speech acts are mastered.

Turning firstly to pragmatic routines, the present study, in which both increases and decreases in the form and use of non-L2-like pragmatic routines were recorded, lends weight to the non-linear developmental path proposed to characterise the development of pragmatic competence in the use of such routines — a path which points to the use of creative, possibly pragmatically inadequate verbalisations and overgeneralisations prior to L2-like employment.

The study also lends weight to previous findings which suggest that the use of internal modification is rather slow in developing. Only when the basic head act of a particular speech act has been mastered does such modification develop to any significant extent — as seen in the analysis of learners' use of lexical and phrasal downgraders with refusals.

As regards the choice of specific modifiers, the present data also provides further evidence to suggest that modifiers which are syntactically relatively easy to use, are among the first to emerge in learners' interlanguage productions to a large extent — indeed, in line with the complexification hypothesis. Learners' initial overgeneralisation of the politeness marker "*bitte*" (please) giving way to the syntactically more complex downtoner and also the move from "*bitte*" (please) used in a final to an embedded position are two cases in point.

The development of L2 pragmatic competence appears, in many instances, to be hindered by the development of sociopragmatic competence. In other words, despite a relatively advanced level of pragmalinguistic competence, learners' L2 sociopragmatic competence often lags somewhat behind. Although situational variation is recorded in the present study, such variation often does not reflect that of the L2 norm. The increases in the complexity of the syntactic downgraders employed with conventionally indirect request strategies over time, is one such example, since the final product is overgeneralisation relative to the L2 norm in the majority of situations. Nevertheless, it is suggested that such overgeneralisation may represent a stage in the development of learners' pragmatic competence — it may, for instance, be the result of learners' automation of this particular linguistic feature — and their desire to show-off this new competence.

Assuming that this development sequence suggested holds to some degree, an order of development of particular speech acts can be posited based on the present analysis. The present learners' competence in realising requests proved, for example, to be more advanced than for the remaining two speech acts, offers and refusals of offers, prior to the year abroad. This conclusion was reached following a number of different analyses and indeed, it lends weight to Kasper/Schmidt's (1996:159) proposal that in the absence of positive transfer refusals are only successfully performed late in the L2. Evidence includes the differences in levels of complexity found in the use of syntactic downgraders with conventionally indirect request and offer strategies — while over-complexity was a feature of the request data relative to the L2 data in L(1), and even more so in L(3), no such over-complexity was found in the offer data. Also, the higher levels of lexical and phrasal downgrading in the request relative to the refusal data in L(1) and to a lesser extent in L(3) (due to increases in the frequency of lexical and phrasal downgraders used with refusals) provide further evidence.

The reasons for the differences in L2 competence levels between the different speech acts is suggested to relate to the availability of an "easy-to-use" lexical and phrasal downgrader — the politeness marker "*bitte*" (please) — in realising requests. However, this is clearly not the only reason. Instead, it is believed that learners' higher competence in requesting is related to the rather routinised head-act form of requests, to learners' familiarity with requests from their educational experience and to their low cognitive complexity as Initiate moves (relative to refusals).

Summary of cross-cultural findings

Although the focus of the present study is on the developing interlanguage pragmatic competence of the core group of year abroad students, information on requesting, offering and refusing offers in German and Irish English is also provided. Some of this data provides some interesting cross-cultural insights not previously discussed

— most particularly in the area of offers and refusals of offers. It was shown, for example, that while ritual reoffers are a feature of Irish English, they do not play a role in offer-refusal exchanges in German — leading to a higher degree of complex exchanges of the form Initiate– n (Contra)–Satisfy, where $n > 1$ in the former speech community where a simple exchange suffices in the latter. In other words, in contrast to German, many offers in Irish English are not seen as sincere until a reoffer occurs. It should, however, be remembered that these findings are based on data which deals only with offers-refusal of offer exchanges where the refuser knows in advance that s/he wishes to refuse — in other words, this is not decided during the course of interaction. In addition, the offerer knows that the refuser is going to refuse.

The Irish English NS data analysed in this study was gathered in the light of possible regional differences between Irish English and other varieties of English, such as British English, which had been previously studied to a certain extent. Such potential differences would have negatively influenced the validity of the L1 data. Although this study did not strive a comparison of Irish English with British English or any other variety of English, some comments were made in the course of the analysis on this issue — specifically, for example, with regard to the fact that the higher levels of syntactic downgrading found in the present Irish English request realisations with conventionally indirect head act strategies relative to German NS levels reflected similar findings by Faerch/Kasper (1989:226) for British English and German. In addition, the preference in Irish English for expressions of thanks with a lower degree of formality than in German reflected a similar preference to that found in British English by Edmondson/House (1981:163). On the other hand, however, the higher overall levels of thanking illocutions found by Edmondson/House in British English relative to German were not confirmed in the present analysis for Irish English. Such differences may be explained by regional variation — or indeed, by the exclusive concentration in the present study on expressions of gratitude in refusal of offer realisations.

6.2 Limitations of study

In this section, the limitations of the study are addressed. It is against the backdrop of these limitations which the research findings presented should be viewed. The primary methodological limitations, relating to weaknesses of production questionnaires — such as simplified situational descriptions and the reductive assumption regarding the stability of contextual variables — were highlighted and discussed in 4.1.1.1 and 4.1.1.1.1, as were issues relating to the lack of information concerning the correlation of particular factors, such as the relative obligation to offer, with realisations of offers and refusals of offers. In addition, compromises made in

relation to the frequency of situations chosen and the desire to investigate students' knowledge of situational variation were addressed. Such issues will not be considered further in the present discussion. Instead, the focus here is on the lack of learner control data, the choice of informants, the primary concentration on pragmatic knowledge and the absence of a follow-up study. Let us start with the lack of learner control data.

Lack of learner control data

The present study included three primary groups of informants — a group of advanced Irish learner informants during their year abroad and also native speaker informants of German and Irish English. A fourth group, a learner control group, was also included in the original research design. This group of informants were classmates of the year abroad group who had decided against the study abroad experience. The purpose of including this group in the investigation was to increase the internal validity of the present findings — in other words, to increase the degree to which it could be asserted that the change in the independent variable (the change from foreign to second language input) caused a change in the dependent variable (i.e., L2 pragmatic competence). Indeed, data was actually gathered from this fourth group of informants — 15 students having completed the questionnaire in the initial data collection process. Difficulties arose, however, in the final data collection (only two were planned — simultaneously to the first and last data collection for the year abroad group) where a total of only eight students completed the production questionnaire. This low return rate was possibly due, firstly, to the fact that approximately a year had elapsed between the first and second data collection and students had lost interest in the project and, secondly, due to the fact that the researcher herself was not on site — being based in Germany at the time. Questionnaires were posted to the Department of German in Dublin — from there they were distributed to the students involved. A pigeon hole was given over to the collection of the questionnaires in the department. However, no financial reward was offered and no encouragement was given to students to complete the questionnaire apart from a letter from the researcher which accompanied each questionnaire. Hoffman-Hicks (1999:64 *passim*) reports of similar difficulties in her data collection process. Her control group started with sixty-five in time one, fell to thirty in time two and eventually finished with ten informants in time three despite a \$5 financial reward given in time two and three when the researcher herself was not present. Due to the low response rate, the control data is not analysed in the present study since eight students are too few for an analysis of the control group which would be comparable with the core learner group of thirty-three. The lack of such control data represents one of the main drawbacks of the present study. Nevertheless, as noted by Larsen-Freeman/Long (1991:19f), although such a pre-

experimental design does prohibit conclusive statements being made about causality, it does not overshadow the value of the research in providing insights into the SLA process, insights which may be tested more rigorously at a later point in time.

Choice of informants

Homogeneity was an important precondition for participation in the present study. However, in the light of the need to include approximately thirty students in the primary year abroad group, some sacrifices had to be made with regard to students' comparability as far as length of stay in the target speech community and level of proficiency were concerned. With regard to length of stay, the learner informants selected ranged from never having been to a German-speaking country before to having spent six months in the target speech community. In addition, students' proficiency levels were established somewhat broadly as advanced on the basis of the rather homogeneous educational background of the group and also their subjective judgements of linguistic competence.

Although the German and IrEng NS informants chosen for the present study were selected in order to elicit native speaker data which would be comparable with the year abroad group, neither of these datasets were ideal since the data from both groups was elicited in one place given data collection constraints — Hamburg in the case of the L2 data and Carlow in the case of the L1 data. None of the year abroad informants, however, studied in Hamburg during the academic year 1997/1998 — the next nearest group of students being based in Bielefeld, somewhat to the south. In fact, as mentioned in 4.1, the students were placed in fourteen different cities and towns, scattered around Germany. However, since regional differences may exist on a pragmatic level, a NS convention in the north of a speech community may not necessarily hold in the southern part of the same speech community. As a result, the input to which the study abroad group was exposed may have differed somewhat to the L2 data taken as the norm against which any changes in pragmatic competence were analysed. In addition, the year abroad students had grown up in different parts of Ireland. Consequently, the L1 data elicited to explain issues of potential transfer was not ideal.

A last note on the choice of L2 native speaker control employed in the present study relates to their largely monolingual backgrounds which may not be an appropriate comparison for language learners in a second language context. Indeed, a bilingual or intercultural norm has been suggested as a more suitable choice of L2 norm in interlanguage pragmatic studies (cf. House/Kasper 2000:110 *passim*, Kramsch 1998:27ff). Hoffman-Hicks (1999:278), with particular reference to the situation in which study abroad students find themselves, suggests reference to an L2 group of "... 'displaced' members of the target community rather than (to) students from that region". She suggests that such "displaced" members, like the study abroad

informants, may feel less secure relative to native speakers who are settled in a particular city or town. Although these solutions may seem like a viable solution on the surface, the problem of accessing such data is not to be underestimated.

Concentration on pragmatic knowledge

The present study was concerned with the development of learners' L2 pragmatic competence. Here in line with Bachman's (1990) model of communicative competence, pragmatic competence was understood as pragmatic knowledge. Consequently, an off-line rather than on-line method of elicitation was chosen in order to avoid issues of pragmatic ability, such as a high degree of cognitive complexity, obscuring developments in pragmatic knowledge. In the present study, developments in learners' processing capacity were also recorded over time, i.e., informants became more adept at retrieving and using their sociopragmatic and pragmatic knowledge and thus were not overburdened as easily in situations of complexity, spontaneity, stress or fatigue. Given, however, the lack of time pressure in responding when completing the production questionnaire, learners' ability to use their pragmatic knowledge was not impeded by any major cognitive overload due to interpersonal stress or to the need to act in a complex situation — consequently, it may be that learners' actual pragmatic ability is not as advanced on-line as it may appear to be off-line.

Absence of follow-up study

It is possible that the present students' pragmatic competence in time L(3) may have suffered attrition on students' return to the foreign language setting of their university in Dublin. Alternatively, it is possible that although learners may have noticed particular aspects of their input, they may not have fully understood them while in the target speech community. Understanding may possibly follow some time later. Unfortunately, however, no such follow-up information is available in relation to the present informants. It would have been insightful, for example, to distribute the production questionnaires employed to the year abroad group a number of months after their return and to compare this data with the L(3) data.

6.3 Practical research implications

The present findings reveal areas of learners' pragmatic competence in which developments towards the L2 norm took place over a ten month study-abroad period, areas in which no changes occurred despite differences between interlanguage and L2 levels of competence and, finally, areas in which learners' L2

pragmatic competence, although having changed with time, differed from that of the German NS data at the end of the year abroad. Indeed, in some instances, such as learners' pragmalinguistic overgeneralisation of the pragmatic routine "*Kein Problem*" ("No problem"), learners' pragmatic competence at the end of their year abroad left them more open to pragmatic failure than prior to the year abroad.

It is clear that the length of time spent in the target speech community was too short to expect extensive changes in learners' L2 pragmatic competence. Nonetheless, the question must be posed as to whether the effectiveness of such study abroad periods can be enhanced in relation to the development of L2 pragmatic competence. Three issues are discussed in the following in this regard. The first concerns length of stay, the second the potential value of pre-year abroad preparation courses and the third, the importance of post-year abroad debriefing.

Length of stay

A study abroad period is conventionally two terms in length. However, if the benefits of the year abroad recorded could be experienced within one term rather than two, this would lead to significant cost savings for the Socrates scheme — and indeed, for the students themselves.

In the present study, learners' L2 discourse structure of offer-refusal exchanges was found to become more L2-like by L(2) — i.e., after two months in the target speech community. However, most developments were slower. Indeed, while some developments were gradual, other changes in learners' pragmatic competence did not appear until the end of their year abroad — in L(3). Gradual developments recorded over the year abroad include, for example, with few exceptions, increases in the direction of the German NS norm in all situations from L(1) to L(3) in the complexity of the syntactic downgraders employed with all conventionally indirect head act offer and request strategies analysed. Examples, on the other hand, of developments which were not recorded until time L(3) include the majority of changes in learners' use of pragmatic routines, the L2-like increases recorded in the use of "*bitte*" (please) in an embedded position rather than in final position and the present learners' L2-like shifting preference of lexical and phrasal downgrader from the politeness marker "*bitte*" (please) to the downtoner.

Overall, then the present study clearly points to the superiority of a year abroad over a term abroad, reflecting previous research findings pertaining to the effect of the second language context (cf. 3.3.2.1.2).

Pre-year abroad preparation

The present year abroad students entered the study abroad period with only a minimum of preparation. It was predominantly practical matters, such as how to

open a bank account, how to register at the town hall, the structure of German universities, etc., which had been addressed in the year abroad preparation weekend organised by the department. Although a talk was also given on the development of learning strategies for building vocabulary, this was the only linguistically-oriented component included. Cultural issues which were dealt with were broad in nature, focusing primarily on Germany as a more liberal society than Ireland. Such discussions focused around a showing of the German film, *“Der bewegte Mann”*. No detail was given on the pragmatic issues relating to the content of the present study. Indeed, preparation of any sort is a missing component in many third level institutions (cf., e.g., Brierley/Coleman 1997:2 on the lack of such support mechanisms in the United Kingdom). When asked on the post-year abroad questionnaire whether they felt they had been adequately prepared for cultural differences, 48% of the present students replied in the negative, and the 52% who replied in the affirmative referred to prior sojourns in the target speech community and to preconceived ideas, many of which, they commented, turned out not to be true.

Research by Schmidt (1993), however, emphasises the important role which noticing and understanding “the gap” between one’s interlanguage and that of L2 native speakers’ plays in the development of pragmatic competence and indeed, the present study revealed that in incidents where such a gap was noticed and understood, learners’ interlanguage pragmatic competence did develop towards the L2 norm (in those cases where adoption of the L2 norm was desired by the learners). In addition, research pertaining to the teachability of L2 pragmatics has revealed that instruction is better than no instruction for a large number of pragmatic areas with some few exceptions (cf. House 1996b, Kubota 1995), and importantly, that explicit instruction is superior than implicit instruction in this regard.¹ In the absence of such noticing opportunities, pragmatic competence lags behind. Indeed, House (1997b:82), building on Schmidt’s (1993) approach, states that it is possible:

..., daß Fremdsprachenlerner es jahrelang versäumen, ihre Aufmerksamkeit auf wichtige pragmatische Faktoren zu richten, mit der Konsequenz, daß sie sich pragmatischer Unterschiede zwischen L1 und L2 nicht bewußt werden.

(...that foreign language learners fail for years to notice important pragmatic factors with the consequence that they do not become conscious of pragmatic differences between the L1 and L2.)

The target language input to which the study abroad informants who participated in the present research project were exposed, and indeed, the input to which participants of numerous similar study abroad programs are exposed, can be largely described as implicit input in so far as students are not provided with explicit metapragmatic information in a structured manner. Consequently, in the light of the present research findings, it would appear beneficial to attempt to increase the number of noticing opportunities with regard to pragmatic issues prior to and

during the learners' sojourn abroad. In the following, some ideas are put forward on how this may be accomplished. While some of these ideas may be limited to preparation prior to departure only, it is recommended that they be linked with tasks to be completed in the host culture — also discussed in the following.

Ideally, pragmatic issues should be addressed in the language classroom. However, even if pragmatic issues are not an integral part of students' language classes, as is so often the case (cf. 3.3.2.1.2), a year abroad preparation course could include such matters. Two important steps are identified in the literature as necessary for the teaching of L2 pragmatics — namely increasing awareness and providing opportunities for communicative practice — the latter activity having the goal of developing students' pragmatic ability, i.e., of enabling them to gain access to and to combine their sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge efficiently (cf. Desselmann 1990: 165, House 1997c and Kasper 1997c: 122). Of these two steps, increasing awareness is undoubtedly the most important because, as Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991: 5) suggest: "It is impossible to prepare students for every context, or even all of the most common situations they will face in natural language settings". It is thus awareness of pragmatic issues which is to be striven for. On the basis of such awareness, it can be hoped that incidents of productive and receptive pragmatic failure will decrease and that learners themselves will begin to notice pragmatically appropriate ways of offering or refusing, for example, themselves. This increased weighting of awareness relative to practice is of particular relevance for year abroad students, since the target language context would appear to provide them with plentiful opportunities to build on such awareness, and, of course, also to develop pragmatic ability. Such opportunities for production — or indeed comprehension — of a wide-range of every-day speech acts do not exist in the conventional teacher-fronted classroom (cf. Kasper 1997c: 124).

Three main areas are identified which should be addressed in the foreign language classroom as far as L2 pragmatics are concerned. These include cross-cultural differences, interlanguage-specific errors, and finally the development of strategies to deal with misunderstanding.

As far as cross-cultural differences are concerned, there are a number of means of increasing pragmatic awareness in the foreign language class which are frequently suggested. These include inviting in native speaker "classroom guests" (Bardovi-Harlig et al. 1991: 10), using sample interactions and exercises, discussing contrastive materials — such as film titles, signs, parallel texts (cf. House 1994: 88) and also speech acts and conversational functions, such as leave-takes and greetings ("The culture puzzle" (cf. Bardovi-Harlig 1996: 33, Bardovi-Harlig et al. 1991: 10)). Discussion of critical incidents reported by the teacher, on tape or experienced by learners in open roleplays is also a valuable method (cf. House 1997c, Rose 1999: 172f and Tomalin/Stempleski 1993: 84ff), as indeed is the use of video-related tasks.² In addition, learners can be transformed into researchers and required to

research the pragmatic conventions which apply in their own native speech community and in the target speech community. Where L2 field notes are not a possibility in this regard, recourse can be taken to film, television, radio, books and plays.³ A further option in the present internet-era is the use of on-line speech corpora — this is a particularly feasible option where English is the foreign language concerned, since corpora, such as the British National Corpus (BNC) allow a simple online search free of charge (cf. British National Corpus (BNC), simple search). A possible example of the use of such corpora would be for students to research the contexts in which particular leave-takes occur. Examples of cross-cultural issues which could be addressed in an Irish German as a Foreign Language classroom include some of the differences between German and Irish English pragmatics which have been highlighted in the present study and also in previous findings by Schneider/Schneider (2000) on compliment responses. Further contrastive research concentrating on German and English — albeit British English or American English — include research on conversational openings and closings (cf. House 1982, Kotthoff 1989), on the use of pragmatic routines in discourse phases, discourse strategies and as gambits (cf. House 1997c), on conversational style (Luchtenberg 1994) and also on the realisations of requests (cf. House/Kasper 1981) and refusals (Beckers 1999) — to take but a few examples. Textbook data, although on the surface an obvious option, has in general been found to be less than appropriate, since it is frequently based on native speaker intuition rather than on empirical research findings.⁴ The practical component of pragmatically-oriented courses should include student-centred activities, such as roleplays, simulations and drama (cf. House 1997c, Kasper 1997c: 123).

As regards learner-specific errors, such as, for example, learners' overgeneralisation of the politeness marker "*bitte*" (please) or low use of downtoners, it is suggested that these could potentially be brought to learners' attention by, for example, taping their interlanguage productions and comparing these with similar native speaker productions — or indeed with previous research findings, such as those of the present study.

The third area, the development of strategies to deal with misunderstanding is necessary in order to compensate for the rather unrealistic goal of L2 pragmatic competence. Here it is advisable for learners to be encouraged not to come to definite conclusions concerning particular interpretations of L2 language use, but rather to consider such interpretations as temporary and open to revision. Other strategies include always being aware of the potential for misunderstandings and addressing such issues (cf. House 1997c). Learners can be trained to use such strategies in the framework of the activities suggested above for developing an awareness of cultural differences.

Supportive measures outside of the language class framework include offering students the opportunity to participate in an applied linguistic module on pragmatic

issues or on intercultural communication prior to their sojourn abroad. Such courses serve to heighten students' awareness of cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatic issues by serving as a platform to discuss previous research findings and also by possibly requiring students to conduct their own empirical research — usually in return for a credit. Such a course, entitled “The pragmatics of native/non-native speech”, developed and conducted by the present researcher in the University of Bonn, is included in Appendix 14. Although this course was not designed for year abroad preparation, there is no doubt that students' pragmatic awareness was sensitised as a result of the course.

Apart from such preparation prior to a study abroad period, students should ideally also be “set to work” during a sojourn abroad. Ideally, they would also be awarded credits for their efforts, or at the very least, their work should be discussed on return to the home culture. A number of possible tasks can be suggested, the most beneficial of which, in my view, is requiring learners to work as researchers in the second language context and employ ethnographic methods. In such a capacity, the learners themselves are forced to become aware of what they see and hear. Preparation for such tasks is, however, essential — as underlined by a number of reports of such pre-departure preparation programs (cf. Barro/Grimm 1993: 152ff, Jurasek et al. 1996 and the NRAD, workshop D on intercultural issues). Skills to be taught include the use of field diaries, how to conduct interviews, and also skills of analysis. One such attempt to enhance the intercultural aspect of the year abroad has been undertaken by LARA (cf. LARA, ethnography course). This British body, funded by the Higher Education Authority, provides information for lecturers regarding courses in the use of ethnographical methods in a study-abroad context and also ideas regarding possible forms which such tasks might take. Workshops are conducted in this area also. An example of a possible project which is socio-pragmatic in nature might, for example, be “the contexts in which students in Augsburg realise refusals of offers”; an example of a pragmalinguistic project on the other hand is “the linguistic means and strategies employed by students in Berlin when engaging in greeting and leave-taking with other students”. Projects focusing on both sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic issues, i.e., on contexts, means and strategies, are, of course, also possible (cf. Kasper 1997c: 123 on further possible observation tasks).

Either one particular project — similar to those suggested above — can be conducted over a study abroad period or, alternatively, students may be required to keep learner diaries during their sojourn abroad. The diary project conceived by the Interculture Project based in Lancaster University, for example, proposes the use of such means as a way of providing learning support during a study abroad period. Indeed, diaries structured specifically to the needs of students of German can be downloaded from this web-site (cf. Interculture Project, subproject diaries). Entries to be completed by students relate to their newly-gained insights into various

aspects of linguistic competence and also cultural awareness. Students are required to set goals for the week ahead and to conduct mini-surveys on areas of the target culture which interest them over a three week time span using research tools, such as questionnaires, interviews and observation. While these particular diaries are not specifically related to L2 pragmatic issues, it would seem possible to develop similar methods of focusing students' awareness on such aspects of language. The advantage of this form of support over single project-style guidance is that learners are not focused on one particular aspect of language and culture prior to their stay abroad — instead, they are required to be “on the look-out” for new insights and to become curious about particular aspects of language and culture.

Potential opposition to such suggestions for study-abroad support may come from individuals who view such measures as “spoon-feeding”. Such individuals are of the opinion that raising students awareness of cross-cultural issues robs them of an important experience, i.e., of discovering such differences for themselves during a sojourn in the target speech community (cf. NRAD, workshop D, intercultural issues). Indeed, some of the present year abroad students when asked on the post-year abroad questionnaire whether they were well informed about cultural differences prior to their year abroad offered similar opinions. Some examples include:

- (104) A2F:
Well I think one has to learn this for themselves.
- (105) A17F:
No. That's something you have to experience yourself.
- (106) A26F:
I don't think I was, but I don't think it's something you can/should be told about — everyone should come out here and pick up on those themselves.

There is no doubt but that this aspect of the year abroad is particularly satisfying for those learners who do realise the relativism of culture and grasp the link between language and culture. However, it is suggested that study abroad preparation in this area offers a number of important advantages. Firstly, learners, such as C5M in the present data (cf. (38), Part 5.1), may not all experience such enlightenment. Rather, they may experience culture shock to a severe degree, leading to the rejection not only of L2 pragmatic norms, but of the target culture in general. Indeed, traces of such culture shock among the present year abroad learners are seen in some of the replies on the post-year abroad questionnaire to the students' opinions of any differences in directness they had detected between the German and Irish use of language. Some of these comments include:

- (107) C7F:
Sometimes, you would appreciate a German taking the trouble to inform you of something they've noticed (you've left your lights on in your car) but other times they are blunt, to the point of being rude (commenting on how you look).

(108) C6M:

It's positive if you are looking for a direction, e.g. where a building is, but if you are trying to have a normal chat, and the Germans are overly direct with what they say, it can shock someone or put them out.

(109) A27F:

I don't see why my learning of German should necessarily mean that I embrace negative aspects of that culture. People are sensitive and being direct with them about something can be hurtful. Germans don't often realise that we are not direct like them (comment elicited from a question relating to the adoption of the L2 norm).

These comments reveal that despite being in the target speech community for two academic terms, these learners continue to take offence at differing pragmatic norms, associating them — in the case of C7F (comment (107)), in particular, with the individuals in question. Other similar comments relating to initial culture shock, which appears to have been overcome with time include:

(110) A18F:

I think their directness means you know where you stand although at first it is hard to get used to.

(111) A19F:

At the beginning, it is difficult to understand where they are coming from and it may really upset/annoy you but once you get used to it, you may understand them better and choose which way you wish to treat the situation, be it +, — ...

Pre-year abroad preparation which focuses on cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics serves to decrease the impact of such culture shock and ease students' initial encounters with the L2 speech community as students learn to expect cultural differences and are ready to treat them as a positive learning experience (cf. van Amelsvoort 1999, Barro/Grimm 1993:156). In addition, I would argue that introducing learners to pragmatic aspects of language prior to the year abroad does not rob them of the unique experience of discovering the peculiarities of L2 pragmatics. Rather, experiential learning provides learners with the opportunity to discover such differences themselves — the difference being that such experiences occur in a different setting — prior to rather than during students' sojourn in the target speech community. Furthermore, it can be suggested that learners who have been prepared for their year abroad, rather than being deprived of such experiences, are actually enriched since their heightened sense of awareness of pragmatic issues enables them to notice more during their study abroad experience than they would have without such preparation. As mentioned above, it is impossible to teach all speech act sets and contexts to learners due to a lack of research in this area, but more pointedly to a lack of time and resources. Consequently, heightening learners' awareness empowers them to conduct the research themselves — and to yield its fruits.

Post-year abroad debriefing

Pre-year abroad preparation, although arguably the most important part of efforts to support year abroad program, is, it is suggested, not, in itself sufficient to derive maximum benefit from this unique experience or indeed, to counter some of its potentially negative consequences. Debriefing following a sojourn abroad is a further important aspect of support which is, regrettably, all too often overlooked (cf., e.g., NRAD, workshop D, intercultural issues). In the following brief discussion of this issue, it will be assumed that pre-year abroad preparation has taken place. Where this is not the case, debriefing is logically of even greater importance.

Debriefing needs are many. Reverse culture shock may, for example, make students' home-coming experience less than positive (cf. Jones 1997). Following a year abroad, students see their L1 speech community from a somewhat more objective standpoint and aspects which may have previously appeared standard may suddenly appear in a negative light. Indeed, students may even wish to stay in the host speech community rather than returning to their home university. This may be particularly so where, as is, for instance, the case in University College Dublin, many of the year abroad students' former class-mates have already left the university, not having engaged in the year abroad experience but rather having completed their final examinations directly. Added to this is the fact that in many cases in Ireland and Britain at least, year abroad students are faced with the difficulties of final year examinations upon return. In addition, given the large role which the L2 community has played in students' lives, they may often compare the L1 speech community with the L2 speech community. However, rather than comments such as, "in Germany...", being interpreted as interesting by students who have not experienced an extended sojourn abroad, they may be interpreted as an expression of a desire to show off ones' wide travel experience, and so serve only to further alienate home-coming students from the L1 speech community. Similarly, year abroad students' L1 behaviour may have become more L2-like over time, as was, for instance, reported in the retrospective interviews conducted in the present study (cf. 5.1), where informant A10F confessed of being told off by her parents for adhering to L2 rather than L1 pragmatic conventions in relation to reoffers. Although students may wish to continue to behave in an L2-like manner, this may serve to make their reintegration more difficult.

On the other hand, students may have developed prejudices in relation to the L2 target speech community, and may have become negatively disposed to the L2 culture — although it can be suggested that this is more likely to happen in the absence of year-abroad preparation courses. Given the importance of such non-linguistic factors in language acquisition (cf. 3.4), there is no doubt of the need to address such matters and to highlight the relativity of cultural issues.

Furthermore, the efforts of year abroad students, particularly where they have engaged in ethnographic research during their year abroad, should be recognised, not only as a motivation for students to complete such work during their year abroad but also as a symbol of the importance of such independent research. Finally, insights gained by individual students in relation to pragmatic issues can be exploited to enhance other students' pragmatic knowledge.

But how can such debriefing needs be met? Those few efforts at debriefing which currently exist often take the form of inviting home-coming students to "talk to" outgoing students or to set up stalls which outgoing students can visit (cf. NRAD, workshop D, intercultural issues). The content addressed on such occasions is, however, usually of a practical nature, and while such information is naturally advantageous to outgoing students, the benefit to home-coming students is rather minimal, apart from communicating the feeling that their sojourn was beneficial and meaningful. Instead, fundamental to any debriefing session is the establishment of a forum for the discussion of pragmatic issues and possible stereotypes and culture shock.

Ideally, a day or weekend course would be organised for home-coming year abroad students at the beginning of their first academic term after returning to the L1 speech community. Here pragmatic issues and aspects of culture shock and reverse culture shock would be addressed. This would also represent an ideal forum for the presentation and discussion of ethnographic research projects which may have been conducted. Not only would this latter proposal serve to recognise students' independent research but it would also increase their pragmatic awareness and pragmatic knowledge. Out-going students may, conceivably, also be invited to listen to such presentations as a means of increasing pragmatic awareness and also as a partial means of preparing them for conducting similar projects during their year abroad.

A further alternative where the organisation of a venue is a potential problem is the establishment of a mailing list to which year abroad students would be asked to subscribe. Such mailing lists can be set up easily and while some demand a fee (e.g., ListBot), others are free of charge on the World Wide Web (cf. eGroups, for example). The owner of such a list (ideally an applied linguist) would suggest practical and cross-cultural issues to be addressed during the students' year abroad, as carried out in the University of Sheffield (cf. Interculture Project, subproject diaries). However, it would be important that this discussion forum should remain open for a time after students' return to the L1-community when reverse culture shock begins to become obvious. In such cases, the list would serve as a support group for students who may feel isolated and displaced.

6.4 Directions for future research

Interlanguage pragmatics is still a young field of enquiry. Consequently, the opportunities for research are vast. Nevertheless, a number of particularly pertinent areas of research relating to the present longitudinal investigation are highlighted in the following. These include the need for further longitudinal research into the development of L2 pragmatic competence and for research into the effect of individual factors on L2 pragmatic competence and on its development. Finally, a research gap also exists in relation to the effect of year abroad preparation courses on the development of L2 pragmatic competence. Possibilities for further research in the area of cross-cultural pragmatics are also highlighted.

Need for longitudinal research

Longitudinal studies, such as the present investigation, remain a priority research interest in interlanguage pragmatics and indeed, as highlighted in 2.6.3.2, the demand for such research is particularly extreme in the case of languages other than English. Future studies could be designed along the lines of the present study. However, it is suggested that such studies take the limitations of the present investigation detailed in 6.2 into account — by, for example, referring to a learner control group which although similar to the study abroad group of informants does not opt for the study abroad experience, or by attempting to choose L1 and L2 informants who are more comparable to the year abroad group. Also, the inclusion of a follow-up study of the L2 pragmatic competence of the year abroad group in the research design would yield insightful evidence into issues of pragmatic competence and indeed, into the value of the study abroad program itself.

Given the breath of pragmatic competence, it is clear that no one study can measure learners' L2 pragmatic competence per se. Instead, it is necessary to concentrate on a number of subsets of pragmatic competence. In the present study, L2 pragmatic competence was measured based on learners' knowledge of three particular speech acts — offers, refusals of offers and requests. Here, the concentration was on issues of learners' production to the exclusion of issues of comprehension. However, comprehension of pragmatic intent is also an important element of pragmatic competence. Such issues could be addressed in future research, as indeed could knowledge of production and comprehension of other aspects of pragmatics, such as implicature and deixis, to take a few examples. Also the range of speech acts which exists is, of course, considerably broader than that analysed in the present study. However, even within the analysis of offers, refusals of offers and requests, it is suggested that further research might be undertaken. In this regard, rather than concentrating on a number of elements of pragmatic competence, such as discourse structure, pragmatic routines and internal modification as done here, it is suggested

that future research might focus instead on one particular area — e.g., internal modification — and undertake a detailed micro-analysis of the data. In other words, rather than, for example, examining the frequency and types of lexical and phrasal downgraders employed by informants, an investigation of the linguistic realisations of the particular lexical and phrasal downgraders employed — e.g., the downtoners or combinations of downtoners chosen in a particular context — represents an interesting area of future research. Finally, as noted in 6.2, learners' developing ability to use pragmatic competence, although also investigated in the present study, had of necessity, to take a back seat. Research concentrating on the development of such pragmatic ability in a year abroad context would, however, also be welcomed. Such an investigation would necessitate an analysis of "online data" — possibly in the form of authentic or roleplay data.

Need for research on individual factors

A further area in which future research would be welcomed is the effect of a stay in the target speech community on the pragmatic competence of different learners. Although such research has already been conducted in various areas of linguistic proficiency (cf. Coleman 1997:4ff for an overview of findings), the effect of individual factors on L2 pragmatic competence and indeed, on the acquisition of L2 pragmatic competence remains an area of interlanguage pragmatics which is ripe for investigation. Such research would also provide indications as to the relative benefit which study abroad may offer various individuals from a pragmatic perspective.

Need for research on study-abroad preparation programs

In 6.3, it was suggested, in the light of the considerable scope for development highlighted in the present learners' L2 pragmatic competence even after a year in the target speech community, that it may be beneficial to increase students' awareness of pragmatic issues prior to a study abroad period via pre-study abroad preparation and/or via study-abroad tasks given research findings on the importance of awareness in the development of L2 pragmatics. To the best of my knowledge, no research has yet been conducted which compares the development of learners' L2 pragmatic knowledge with and without such supportive measures. This represents an interesting area of future research which would not only provide information concerning the effectiveness of such supportive measures — a matter which can only be of interest from a policy-making standpoint given the extensive resources poured into study abroad programs annually — but which would also provide further support for or against Schmidt's (1993) noticing hypothesis, and indeed, make additional information available on the effect of intervention into the process of L2 pragmatic development in a second language context.

Need for cross-cultural research

A by-product of the present study was the uncovering of a number of cross-cultural differences which had not been researched up to this in the area of offers and refusals of offers in Irish English and German. Further research, however, remains to be conducted in this area of cross-cultural differences. Particularly welcome would be further cross-cultural research into a wider range of offer-refusal of offer exchanges, such as those in which the refuser decides to refuse in the course of a particular interaction or those in which the offerer does not expect the refuser to refuse.

Finally, just as on other linguistic levels, regional differences are to be found on the level of pragmatics and, indeed, differences between Irish English and British English were addressed in the present study. However, research on such regional differences remains sparse, and indeed this is particularly so in the case of Irish English. To the best of my knowledge, pure contrastive pragmatic analyses which compare Irish English with other varieties of English include only those studies by Schneider (1999) and Schneider/Schneider (2000) on compliment responses. However, efforts are currently being undertaken to put dialect pragmatics on the map within the framework of the ÉIre (English in Ireland) project at the English Department of the University of Bonn.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. Cf., e.g., Byram et al. (1994:119f), Gass (1997:20ff), House (1993b, 1996a,c), Kasper/Zhang (1995) and Reynolds (1995:5). Rost-Roth (1994) and Scarcella (1990:338) also present an overview of the literature in this regard, and House (2000, 2002) proposes a cognitive discourse processing model to account for such intercultural misunderstandings.
2. Cf. also Davies (1987:76), Nikula (1996:197f), Oksaar (1991:20) and Rost-Roth (1996) regarding the relationship between perceived politeness level and L2 proficiency level.

Chapter 2

1. Cf., e.g., definitions by Crystal (1985:240), Kasper (1997a), Leech (1983:6), Levinson (1983:5ff), Mey (1993:42) and Thomas (1995:23). Indeed, recently Wolfgang Schulze has been attempting to “collect” definitions of the term “pragmatics” on the internet, more specifically, on the LINSE, Linguistik-Server Essen (cf. Schulze 1997).
2. Here pragmatics is understood as micropragmatics and is viewed separately to discourse elements (macropragmatics).
3. For a more detailed overview of speech act theory, the reader is referred to Allan (1998), Linke et al. (1996:182ff), Meibauer (1999:84ff) and Thomas (1995:28ff passim).
4. Some of these classifications result from a lexical classification of illocutionary verbs (e.g., Austin 1976:151ff, Ballmer 1979, Ballmer/Brennenstuhl 1981, Vendler 1972, Wierzbicka 1987), while others undertake a classification of acts (e.g., Bach/Harnish 1979, D’Andrade/Wish 1985, Edmondson 1981, Searle 1976). For a comparison of taxonomies, the reader is referred to Allan (1998), Hancher (1979) and Ulkan (1992:44ff).
5. Cf. Ballmer (1979:255f), Ballmer/Brennstuhl (1981:56ff), Edmondson (1981:20ff), Rolf (1986) and Wunderlich (1979:284ff) for a criticism of Searle’s taxonomy.
6. Cf. Barron (2002) for a list of some recent studies in this regard.
7. Cf. Allan (1994:4137), Flowerdew (1990:93) and Linke et al. (1996:195) on this point.
8. For an extensive overview on research on politeness, the reader is referred to DuFon et al. (1994), Held (1992, 1995:67ff), Kasper (1990, 1994), Thomas (1995:149ff) and Turner (1996).
9. Cf., e.g., Kogel (1999) and Uffelman (2000) for an example of such etiquette books.
10. Terms employed to describe such politeness are “social indexing” (cf. Ervin-Tripp et al. 1990:314, Kasper 1990:196), “first order politeness” (cf. Watts et al. 1992:3), “deference” (cf. Thomas 1995:170) or “discernment” (“*wakimae*”) (cf. Hill et al. 1986, Ide 1989:230ff).

11. Such politeness is also known as “strategic politeness” (cf. Kasper 1990:194ff), “second order politeness” (cf. Watts et al. 1992:3) or “volition” (cf. Hill et al. 1986, Ide 1989:232f).
12. Cf. Thomas (1995:55ff) and Turner (1995) for an overview of the co-operative principle.
13. Edmondson (1981) and Edmondson/House (1981) put forward a H-Support maxim to describe how one should behave socially in order to be liked by one’s fellow man. Edmondson/House (1981:47f) propose seven conversational maxims — all of which can be summarised by the first of these maxims, namely by the H-Supportive maxim, expressed as follows: “Support your hearer’s costs and benefits and suppress your own”. Lakoff (1973:296 passim), on the other hand, proposes two rules of pragmatic competence: (a) be clear, (b) be polite. While the former corresponds with Grice’s co-operative principle, the latter is further differentiated into three sub-maxims: don’t impose, give options and be friendly, each of which yield different types of politeness.
14. Cf. Brown/Levinson (1987:4), Kasper (1994:3208), Thomas (1995:167) and Turner (1996:6) on this point.
15. Cf., e.g., Kasper (1990:201ff), Thomas (1995:176) and Turner (1996:3ff) for a more detailed critique of this theory.
16. Indeed, O’Driscoll (1996) has argued for the addition in Brown and Levinson’s model of a third concept of face, which he terms “culture-specific face”, in order to compensate for cultural differences in politeness. Likewise, Spencer-Oatey (2000), building on the criticisms pertaining to the universality of Brown/Levinson’s (1987) model, adapts the model to produce a model of rapport management. This includes a social component (“sociality rights component”) and an individual component (“face component”). How viable these extended models prove remains to be established.
17. Cf. Turner (1996:5), Watts et al. (1992:9), van der Wijst (1996:186) and Wood/Kroger (1991:145 passim) for further details. Cf. also Kasper (1990:204f) for an overview of studies showing the effect of further contextual factors besides those identified by Brown/Levinson (1987) on politeness. The reader is also referred to Thomas (1995:176) for additional criticisms.
18. Here it should be noted that the investigation of written language above the level of the sentence, i.e., that understood as “text linguistics” or “*Textlinguistik*” in Europe, is termed “discourse analysis” in the American research tradition. The reader is referred to McHoul (1994:941ff) for details of these different approaches to the study of discourse.
19. Cf. Levinson (1983:286ff), McHoul (1994:943f) and Taylor/Cameron (1987:99ff) on conversation analysis.
20. The analysis of Argentinean Spanish data was conducted independently and was only later incorporated into the CCSARP data (cf. Blum-Kulka 1989:37). Despite preliminary plans to include Russia (Russian) in the project, it did not feature in the final analysis.
21. Cf. also House (1996a:347ff, 1996c:164f, 1997a:82ff, 1997c). Wierzbicka (1985) also proposes cross-cultural dimensions of difference to account for differences in the way language is used in Poland and Australia.
22. Cf. Ellis (1994:167ff) and Kasper (1998b:188ff) for an overview of research on issues of language use in interlanguage pragmatics, and Barron (2002) for a list of interlanguage and cross-cultural studies relating to various speech acts.
23. Cf. also Bardovi-Harlig (2001), Gass/Houck (1999:196f), Hoffman-Hicks (1999:61), House/Kasper (2000:104), Kasper (1998b:185, 2000b), Kasper/Rose (1999:81), Rose (1997:275f, 2000:27f passim) for similar comments.

24. Cf. Kasper (1995b: 14, 1997a,c: 122, 2000b,c, 2001: 12ff) and Kasper/Rose (1999: 96f) for an overview of research into studies on the development of pragmatic competence with classroom intervention. In addition, a recent volume by Rose/Kasper (2001) includes a collection of papers on pragmatics and language learning. Cf. also Norris/Ortega (2000) who offer a synthesis of previous second language research focusing on instruction.
25. A further important differentiation is that between cross-sectional and single moment studies. Single moment studies are those in which a group of learners is treated as one group, irrespective of differences with regard to features of chronological development, such as proficiency and length of stay. The differentiating chronological feature of cross-sectional studies is sometimes overlooked as pointed out by Rose (1997: 277f, 2000: 31f) who showed that several entries from the list of cross-sectional studies provided by Bardovi-Harlig/Hartford (1993a) proved not to be cross-sectional when more closely examined. This disregard of the chronological nature of cross-sectional studies is also seen in Ellis (1994: 169ff) where studies, such as Cathcart (1986), Faerch/Kasper (1989) and Rintell/Mitchell (1989), are categorised as cross-sectional despite only investigating learners of one proficiency level and not addressing developmental issues. Only cross-sectional studies are addressed in Table 2.

Chapter 3

1. It should be noted that, unlike the definition of pragmatic transfer given here, only the influence of the L1 is mentioned in both of the definitions of pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic transfer. It should be clear, however, that as Selinker (1992: 208) also comments, languages other than the L1 can also influence interlanguage. In general, however, the L1 is the usual source.
2. Cf. studies by Bardovi-Harlig/Hartford (1990), Beebe et al. (1990), Beebe/Takahashi (1989a, b), Bergman/Kasper (1993), Blum-Kulka (1982), House (1996b), Kasper (1981) and Lazenby Simpson (1997: 236). Cf. also Hurley (1992: 264ff), Kasper (1992: 215f, 1998b: 194f) and Takahashi (1996: 189ff) for a detailed documentation of some of these studies and others.
3. This translation is the sole responsibility of this researcher. The same applies to all other translations in this work unless otherwise stated.
4. Faerch/Kasper (1989: 243) speak in this regard of a learner preference for the principle of clarity over quantity. However, the terms clarity and quantity are also employed in Lakoff's (1973, 1989) politeness theory in a different context — in Lakoff's (1973: 296) terms, clarity is one of two rules of pragmatic competence (equal to Grice's co-operative principle), and quantity a subset of clarity (cf. 2.4.1). As a result, these terms are not employed in the present analysis.
5. Recently, it has been shown that the Initiate–Response–Feedback format may not be as unsuitable for the development of pragmatic competence as has been suggested. Rather, its relative benefit may depend on the quality and level of participation (cf. Kasper 2000b for a discussion of this issue). Further research is needed in this area.
6. The reader is referred to Kasper (2000b) for a detailed overview of empirical evidence relating to Bialystok's (1993) claims.
7. A critical incident can be defined as “... a situation where there is a communication problem between people of different cultures” (Tomalin/Stempleski 1993: 84, original emphasis). They force learners to attempt to understand deviations from their L1 background. Persons having spent time in a foreign country usually have no difficulty recalling such incidents.

8. Schmidt's (1993) approach to explaining pragmatic development is, of course, not without criticism. As Kasper (1993:68) notes, many aspects of pragmatic development, such as sequence and level of difficulty, are not addressed in the approach. In addition, Kasper/Schmidt (1996: 165) point out the importance of taking social and psychological issues, such as identity, into account (cf. 3.4.1 in this regard).

9. Cf. Ellis (1999:14ff) for an overview of some of the caveats of Long's revised interaction hypothesis, the main disadvantage lying in the restricted focus of the hypothesis which concentrates only on interactional sequences in which communication difficulties arise.

10. Other studies which found pragmatic transfer to increase with proficiency include studies by Blum-Kulka (1982) who found a lack of proficiency to hinder Canadian learners of Hebrew realising indirect strategies in the L2. Also, Beebe/Takahashi (1989b) found advanced Japanese ESL learners to be more direct in their refusals than stereotypes would suggest. They suggest a lack of complete L2 proficiency as a possible reason for this lack of indirectness in the beginners' productions (cf. Beebe/Takahashi 1989b:119). Cf. also Olshtain/Cohen (1989) for similar findings and Wildner-Bassett (1994:11) with regard to pragmatic routines.

11. As Burmeister (1983:293ff) notes in relation to increases in speech acts mastered by learners, the development sequences to be identified in pragmatics are unlike those of the formal side where one form disappears to be replaced by another — rather development is progressive.

12. Developmental issues relating to perception have been investigated by researchers, such as Bardovi-Harlig/Dörnyei (1998), Bouton (1992, 1994), Kerekes (1992), Koike (1996) and Olshtain/Blum-Kulka (1985). Kerekes (1992:26), to take one example, found a proficiency effect in the assessment of the effect of qualifiers in assertive statements. Specifically, she observed that higher proficiency learners were more aware of the mitigating effect of hedges, such as "sort of" and "kind of", on the assertiveness of a particular statement than were learners of low proficiency.

13. A study by Rehbein (1987) into the acquisition of pragmatic routines by adult Turkish immigrants in Germany paints a more depressing picture. These advanced learners, who had spent more than eight years in Germany and who had acquired German without any formal instruction, were found to employ interlanguage specific formula to convey illocutionary force and also to use L2 routines in a linguistically simplified and functionally overextended manner, with no prospect for improvement — their formulas representing a fossilised stage of development (cf. Rehbein 1987:218f *passim*). As is, however, mentioned in 3.3.2.1, there are basic differences between the immigrants and year abroad students which means that research from one group does not necessarily apply to the other.

14. External modification, also called supportive moves, is a cover term for units which support a particular head act. They occur either before or after the head act and having either a mitigating or an aggravating function (cf. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b:275f *passim*).

15. Other researchers have also commented on the differing effect of oral and written elicitation techniques in relation to the waffle phenomenon. Edmondson/House (1991) and House/Kasper (1987:1285) note, based on roleplay data collected within the framework of the Bochum project (Edmondson et al. 1984), that learners do not waffle in situations where there is face-to-face interaction with native speakers. This finding is also supported by Gass/Houck (1999:144 *passim*) and Trosborg (1995:306 *passim*). In a similar vein to Hassall (1997:255ff), Edmondson/House (1991:285) suggest that the difference between oral and written techniques is due to the interaction of the hearer in face-to-face interaction — in his/her role in "... uptake[ing], interrupt[ing], curtail[ing]..."

16. Cf. Ellis (1994:26 *passim*), Gass/Selinker (1994:196ff) or Lightbown/Spada (1993:19ff) for an overview of the behaviourist, mentalist and interactionist positions concerning the importance accorded input in the process of second language acquisition.

17. Cf. Ferguson (1975:4ff) on further characteristics of foreigner talk. The reader is also referred to Fiksdal (1990:131ff), Jakovidou (1993) and Janicki (1985) for recent research in this field and Gass (1997:58ff) for a comprehensive overview of findings in this area.

18. Study abroad periods are often two semesters in length and are, consequently, referred to as a "year abroad". However, sojourns of less than two semesters are also possible — hence the term "study abroad" in this section.

19. The Erasmus program, an acronym for the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, was established by the European Union on 15th June 1987. However, since 14th March 1995, it has been operating under the umbrella of Socrates, the European Community action program for co-operation in the field of education. Support in higher education still, however, goes under the heading of Erasmus (cf. ECCLiPS 1996, European Commission 1997:11, 1998). The reader is referred to Coleman (1998b) for a comprehensive overview of study abroad in the European context.

The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), a self-administrative institution of the academic community in Germany, whose task is to foster contact with institutions of higher education in other countries, also funds a number of foreign undergraduate and postgraduate students of German to study in Germany, and also German students to study abroad (cf. DAAD 1996:2 and the DAAD internet site). As the scholarships for students to study in Germany are generous and competition therefore strong, students awarded such scholarships display a high level of German.

20. Cf. the internet homepage of Pädagogischer Austauschdienst (PAD) on this programme and Walsh (1995:292) for a more detailed discussion of the differences between Erasmus and PAD.

21. Consequently, second language acquisition research on immigrant groups acquiring language cannot be applied without reservation to study abroad students despite the fact that both settings are natural. The same is true of studies relating to research on the development of L2 competence in the classroom context.

22. Researchers, such as Brecht et al. (1995:37), Coleman (1995:21), Freed (1998:31), Meara (1994:32), Milton/Meara (1995:17) and Walsh (1994:48) have also commented on the long lack of research in the area.

23. Cf., e.g., Coleman (1997:13). Recent publications on the linguistic benefits of the year abroad include research by Coleman (1996, 1997), Edmondson (2000), Teichler/Maiworm (1997) and Walsh (1995), the edited volumes by Freed (1995) and Parker/Rouxville (1995) and the Fall, 1998 special volume of the study abroad journal, *Frontiers*, on language learning in a study abroad context (cf., e.g., Freed 1998, Huebner 1998, Regan 1998, Wilkinson 1998b). Freed (1998) provides a historical account of the growth of study abroad research.

Work on how best to prepare students for the challenge of the year abroad has also increased (cf., e.g., Van Amelsvoort 1999 and Byram 1997). In addition, a number of projects are being conducted in Britain, namely the project Residence Abroad Matters (RAM) which encompasses the Interculture Project based at Lancaster University and the Residence Abroad Project based at Portsmouth University. Cf. LARA (The Learning and Residence Abroad Project) and the Interculture Project. In addition, NRAD (The National Residence Abroad Database) has been set up by the LARA Project at Oxford Brookes University and the Residence Abroad Project at Portsmouth University, both funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). This database provides up-to-date information on year abroad matters for third level staff (cf. NRAD (The National Residence Abroad Database)).

24. Although the studies presented and discussed here represent some of the main study abroad investigations conducted to date, comprehensibility is not striven for except in the context of

studies on language use. Rather, the function of the present overview is merely to facilitate an overview of the main research findings in the area of study abroad research to date. Other overviews of study abroad investigations include those by Coleman (1996:78ff, 1997, 1998b), Edmondson (2000) and Freed (1995b, 1998). Some bibliographies of study abroad studies — none of which are, however, exclusively language-focused — include those by NRAD (The national residence abroad database), the University of South Carolina (USC) Center for Global Education and also by Weaver (1989), the latter data of which are included in the USC bibliography.

25. Readers interested in such aspects are referred to investigations by Bicknese (1974a,b), Coleman (1998a) and the Study Abroad Evaluation Project (SAEP) (cf. Carlson et al. 1990:75ff, Oppen et al. 1990 and Willis et al. 1977:53ff).

26. Cf. Kasper (1997a, 2000c:388f, 2001:17) and Kasper/Rose (1999:96f) for an overview of studies in this regard. It should be noted, however, that while such studies show that learners' pragmatic competence benefits from instruction, they also reveal areas of difficulty which may result from the limitations of the foreign-language context, whether due to the limited scope for application of newly acquired knowledge afforded learners in the foreign classroom context and/or to misrepresentation of such practices in materials employed. In addition, House (1996b:245), reporting on the results of a foreign language teaching course on pragmatic routines, finds students who had spent time in the target culture to be superior to those who had not both before and after the course.

27. The reader is referred to further research for information on the effect of individual factors on second language acquisition. Cf., e.g., Dörnyei (1998) and Edmondson (1999:139ff) for a recent review of studies focusing on motivational issues, McDonough (1999) for an overview of learner strategies and Zlobinska (1999) for an overview of research and on the role of personality (introversion/extroversion) in second language acquisition. Skehan (1991) reviews findings on the effect of a range of individual factors on second language acquisition. Cf. also Coleman (1997:4ff), Huebner (1998:9ff) and Regan (1998:82ff) for an overview of findings regarding the role of individual factors in the L2 speech community.

28. Indeed, in the light of the sparse attention devoted to such issues in variation studies, regional variation in speech act realisations represents an area deserving of further research (cf., e.g., Wolfram/Schilling-Estes 1998:142 on American English). Of particular interest for the present study is the claim that ritual refusals are prevalent in Swabia in the South-West of Germany (Burkhard Eltester, personal communication). This latter claim is an interesting area of possible future research.

29. Cf. Thomas (1983:95) on blurts and Kasper (1998b:197ff) for a discussion of the issue of native speaker communicative errors.

Chapter 4

1. It should be noted that roleplay data was also elicited from the core group of year abroad learners on three occasions during their year abroad in an effort to offset the disadvantages held by the production questionnaire for an analysis of the development of pragmatic ability. This data was not, however, analysed further nor is it included in this project, since an analysis of both types of data would have been beyond the scope of an individual project and would not have allowed for an in-depth analysis of three speech acts chosen given the sheer volume of data to be reported. The roleplay data will instead form the basis of future research which will focus in particular on the development of pragmatic ability.

2. Previous to this, this type of questionnaire had been used to study lexical simplification by Levenston/Blum (1978). This questionnaire was formerly known as a discourse completion test (DCT), but due to negative connotations associated with the word “test”, it soon assumed its present title, the discourse completion task (DCT). Larsen-Freeman/Long (1991:41f) also point out that there is a difference between the two terms, test and task, based on the different purposes for which each is devised, a task being to find out what a learner knows, a test on the other hand being to ascertain “... what a learner knows and does not know of the target language”.

3. There has been much debate on the appropriateness of the hearer response. Advocates of same argue that the response serves to signal illocutionary uptake to inform subjects that the response is being understood as a full realisation of the required speech act. They contend that the contextual clues given by this response are necessary because the speech act required is not directly specified and also because there is little room for negotiations which may take place in natural discourse before the actual realisation of the speech act (cf. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989a: 14). Also in defence of the rejoinder, it has been argued that the hearer-response is a mere manifestation of the expectations which speakers may have of a hearer’s response in real-life interaction, and so should not necessarily distort the resulting data (cf. Yamashita 1996: 13). On the other hand, however, Beebe et al. (1990) and Rintell/Mitchell (1989: 251) have criticised the hearer response for limiting the elicited speech acts and biasing the results obtained.

Empirical evidence on this point is rather contradictory. A study carried out by Rose (1992), inspired by research by Rintell/Mitchell (1989), compared results gained using production questionnaires which did not include a hearer-response (dialogue construction task) with data from a classic DCT which included a rejoinder. He established that the presence of a hearer response caused utterances to tend to be slightly shorter and to include slightly less downgraders and supportive moves — albeit not to a statistically significant degree. Furthermore, the hearer response did not influence the head act request strategies used by American English NS. A more recent study by Johnston et al. (1998), however, painted a more complex picture of the impact of the rejoinder on production questionnaire data. They investigated possible effects of including no rejoinder, a preferred rejoinder and a dispreferred rejoinder on native and non-native apology, request and complaint strategies elicited. They found that both the rejoinder and the rejoinder type affected the choice of pragmatic strategy to differing degrees for different speech acts and for native and non-native speakers. Further research remains to be undertaken on this matter.

4. The effect of role-taking is as yet unknown but Rose (1992: 57), in a study focused on investigating the effect of hearer response on responses, does suggest that unexpected findings in a number of situations may possibly be explained by the fact that in these situations respondents played someone else rather than themselves.

5. It should be noted here that the inclusion of lengthy situational descriptions may increase the length of the act and the amount of external modification respondents provide on a production questionnaire. Such was namely found by Billmyer/Varghese (2000) in a comparison of learner and native speaker request realisations elicited on a production questionnaire with a brief situational description and on a questionnaire with an extended situational description. The inclusion of lengthy situational descriptions may thus serve to make production questionnaire data more like spoken data. Further research remains to be conducted in this regard.

6. The relevant situations were (a) the two young strangers on the street, (b) the request for information regarding a summer job and (c) a student’s request for an extension. The unreliability of the street situation was noted by House (1989a: 109), for example, who claimed the situation proved to be “... too sociologically loaded...” owing to its stereotypical nature as a male-female interaction. As regards the other situations, it was first noted that Blum-Kulka/House (1989), Rintell/Mitchell (1989) and Weizman (1989) had excluded these items from their analysis without

explanation, except for a comment from Blum-Kulka/House (1989: 123) in which these situations were claimed not to yield "... cross-culturally reliably comparable data...".

7. The pre-tests which were carried out with five NS of Irish English, five German NS and five Irish learners of German showed that the job information situation elicited a rather diverse range of utterances, some pertaining to questions regarding whether the job was still available, others requesting information relating to the job, and yet others where the participant registered their wish for the job instead of merely asking for information about the job. The situation on the street was completed in many cases with a refusal (to drink coffee) in the form of an excuse as to why the person could not meet for coffee rather than a request to go away. Finally, the situation regarding a request for an extension was found to elicit a large degree of apologies rather than requests. While such apologies may strategically function as a non-conventionally indirect request, this is not necessarily the case.

8. For each of the new request situations, three possible situations were devised in English within the required situational parameters and translated into German by German NS. Following this, a pre-test was carried out in which five Irish English NS, five German NS and five Irish learners of German participated. Based on the results of this pre-test, the most appropriate situations were then selected. The final choice of situations was dependent on the clarity of role-relationships, the realistic content of the situations and on their cross-cultural validity. Potentially difficult vocabulary was also noted in learners' completion of the questionnaire.

9. It should be noted that Edmondson/House (1981:208) identify two possibilities of answering the phone in British English — either (Greet) + Number + Identify or Greet + Identify — in their terms. However, it must be remembered that these data are now some twenty years old and conventions may have changed in this regard. Alternatively, regional differences may be at play.

10. Although this researcher was unaware of any researchers employing this instrument at the time of research design, a variation of this format has been since found to have been employed in unpublished research by Hoffman-Hicks (1999) and Limmaneeprasert (1993). Indeed, the focus of Hoffman-Hicks' longitudinal study on learner's developing pragmatic knowledge of compliments, greetings and leave-takes placed demands on her selection of research instrument similar to those in the present study since she was interested in the sequential aspects of greetings and leave-takes. Existing instruments were found to be overly restrictive. She termed her production questionnaire a "dialogue construction task, fully open-ended with no prompts or rejoinders" (cf. Hoffman-Hicks 1999:77). In her case, opting out was an option and interlocutor initiations were not included. Limmaneeprasert (1993) termed her questionnaire a DC Questionnaire. Her cross-sectional study focused on apologies and responses to apologies.

In all, three pre-tests were conducted in the development of the FDCT — the first in English and German with respectively three native speakers of each language, the second in German with five learners of German and finally, the third also in German with six learners of German. During these tests, completion time was noted and questions directed by students to the researcher present were also recorded. In addition, data was later analysed in order to ensure the speech act of interest was elicited, and also to make certain that the situations were realistic in the particular speech act community. Based on the pre-tests, some changes were made to the FDCT:

- a. Due to the fact that refusing is a face-threatening act, which is often easier avoided, some subjects accepted offers in the pre-test, despite being instructed to refuse them. To ensure elicitation of the speech act under analysis, the word "refuse" was printed in block and underlined in all situational descriptions on the FDCT.
- b. Students were also addressed with the pronoun of address, "*Sie*", in the initial pre-test which lead to some comprehension problems — as the polite form, "*Sie*", was confused with the third person singular form, "*sie*", or with the third person plural form, "*sie*". It was, therefore,

decided to change to the informal address form “*du*” for both the situational descriptions and the general instructions included on the questionnaire. Other considerations which lead to this decision included that in the situational descriptions on the FDCT, students are directly addressed and requested to put themselves in a particular situation, and react as they would in a natural setting. As a result, it is vital that subjects identify with the given situation as quickly and as fully as is possible — use of the “*Sie*” form, by the creating more distance, would have made this somewhat more difficult (cf. Möhl 1996: 43). Also, the Irish students would, in general, have been more familiar with the informal “*du*” form from the educational system.

- c. A change which was suggested by some of the German NS completing the pre-test, but which was not undertaken was to swap a number of lexemes for a more colloquial style. This suggestion concerned the maths situation in particular, in which two friends are talking. It was suggested, for example, that the lexeme “*Angst*” in the opening line: “*Ach, ich habe schreckliche Angst vor diesem Matheexamen nächste Woche...*” be changed to lexemes, such as “*Schiff*” or “*Bammel*”. While this would have indeed been more suitable given the informal situation sketched, the primary concern was the learner group, who, it can be suggested, would, for the most part, not have been familiar with such colloquialisms — prior to their year abroad in any case.
 - d. Finally, questions asked during the data completion sessions related to particular vocabulary items which appeared on the questionnaire. These were noted and a glossary of potentially difficult German vocabulary compiled (cf. Appendix 4), as had been done by Bergman/Kasper (1993:88) for English vocabulary which Thai learners could conceivably find difficult.
 - e. The pre-tests also revealed the need for interlocutor initiations. It was found, namely, that the FDCT without interlocutor initiation distributed yielded a lot of information which was unrelated to the focus of the project — leading to an unnecessary over-taxation of informants (cf. below).
11. Research into refusals carried out by Chen et al. (1995:126) and Houck/Gass (1996:51) did not specify the speech act required either, thus leaving subjects free to realise the more preferred acceptance act. Although rejoinders could have been used in Chen et al. (1995) in order to indicate the desired act, they were not. Since acceptance is less face-threatening and thus easier to realise, it is to be presumed that many instances of this preferred strategy were gathered. The question may, thus, be posed as to how many refusals were actually elicited from the initial group of respondents, as such information is not given in either case. Furthermore, of the refusals which were actually collected, Houck/Gass (1996:58 *passim*) comment that many turned into acceptances following negotiation. It is possible, therefore, that these refusals were similar to ritual refusals (cf. 4.3.3) and thus of a different nature to substantive refusals.
12. In some cases the difficulty of assuming the opposite gender role is avoided for both speech acts. However, in other cases, where, for example, the general identity of one of the interactants is, for the purposes of determining social status, to be taken as given, this was not possible (cf. Appendix 5, situation 1, FCDT).
13. Three Irish native speakers of English and three native speakers of German completed this pre-test. Subsequent adjustments related merely to the clarity of the items.
14. Since the factors relevant to a particular value of imposition vary according to the particular speech act in question (cf. 2.4.2), it is difficult to assess which factors are relevant for each speech act. Information concerning such factors is, however, to the best of my knowledge, not available for offers or refusals of offers. However, the relatively difficulty in refusing was suggested by Beebe et al. (1990:68) to account for variation in refusals.

15. A possible reactivity effect could have resulted if situations had been included with which the informants were not familiar prior to their sojourn in the target speech community. Over time, familiarity would have increased given that the questionnaire was completed on three occasions. Therefore, any changes in the realisations of the speech acts in these particular situations may have been the result of a decrease in cognitive complexity due to the increase in familiarity with the situations rather than to a change due to the study abroad context. Cf. Brown (1988:35) on the reactivity effect.

16. The areas discussed in the following formed the focus of the pre-year abroad questionnaire. However, some supplementary information pertaining to the motivation and attitude of the year abroad students with regard to the year abroad and to the German language in general was also elicited following well-documented findings on the effect of factors such as aptitude, motivation and attitude on second language acquisition (cf. 3.4). Motivation and attitude were broadly established via questions concerning reasons for studying German, use of German, perceptions of German language skills, appreciation of German culture, expectations of stay and attitude to stay. Answers to these questions did not, however, play a part in the final analysis.

17. As mentioned in 3.3.2.1.1, subjective assessments of language proficiency levels have been used extensively in year abroad studies due to their efficiency. However, caution is necessary given their subjective nature (cf. Maiworm et al. 1993:109). Nevertheless, even the use of a standardised testing procedure, such as the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) test, often employed where English is the L2 under investigation, does not guarantee reliable results. Kasper (1993:52f) notes, for example, that the proficiency of learners within the three TEOFL categories (beginning, intermediate and advanced) is possibly more variable than that between levels. The broad homogeneity of the present group of informants is aided by the fact that all informants had learnt German in the centralised Irish educational system and all had studied German in the same university department.

18. Students spending a year abroad in an Austrian University during the academic year 1997/1998 were not given the opportunity to participate in the research because of the logistical difficulties which would have been involved in recording the progress of students scattered throughout both Germany and Austria. Also, given pragmatic differences between varieties of Austrian Standard German and German Standard German discussed in 3.4.2, it would have been necessary to investigate NS differences between these two varieties. Such an analysis would, however, have distracted from the empirical longitudinal study in question.

19. Two pre-tests were conducted on the pre-year abroad questionnaire in early February 1997. Three tutors in the Department of German in University College Dublin completed the first test. Suggestions were made here to change the wording of some of the questions. A second group of seven students completed the questionnaire in the formal setting of a language class. The purpose of this pre-test was to ensure that all questions were comprehensible and that enough space had been provided for answers. Such was the case.

Pre-tests for the post-year abroad questionnaire (in English) were rather more difficult to carry out since the researcher was at that time in Germany and had no access to native speakers of English. Nevertheless, a group of German learners of English were requested to complete the questionnaire to ensure that the questions were clearly phrased. Some potentially unclear phrasing was changed as a result of this pre-test.

20. Although retrospection would have been even more immediate had the retrospection taken place immediately after each individual roleplay rather than after all roleplays had been enacted, it was decided against this design since it was felt that informing participants of the interviews only after participating in the roleplays would increase the reliability of both sets of data (cf. also Ericsson/Simon 1993 on such influences on performance). In any case, all roleplays together took only a few minutes to enact.

21. Robinson's probes were originally based on the notion of exploring intentions, cognitions, planning and evaluations put forward by Ericsson/Simon (1993:198), but they were extended to include an exploration of pragmatic knowledge (cf. Robinson 1992:47). Robinson also probed for source of knowledge, an aspect of interest for the present study. However, she found that advanced subjects' knowledge of this was limited — hence the exclusion of this issue from the present study.
22. The pre-tests were carried out with three dyads, each of learner-native speaker composition in order to approach the year-abroad research situation in as far as was possible. The pre-test served predominantly as a training session for the researcher in order to prevent any researcher bias occurring due to suggestions of "suitable" answers (cf. Cohen 1996a:31f, Cohen/Olshtain 1994:153 and Hron 1982:125 on this danger). It also enabled evaluation of the clarity of the questions posed. Minor changes were made to the format of some of the questions in an effort to enhance their clarity.
23. In other words, an awareness of the pragmatic emphasis of the study may have possibly increased learners' awareness of such aspects and so negatively influenced the validity of the study. Specifically, the Hawthorne effect refers to possible ways in which informants may react due to their inclusion in a particular study. Informants may, for example, be delighted that they are part of a research project and their performance may change as a result of this rather than as a result of the object of investigation (cf. Brown 1988:32). This effect is always a threat to the validity of the findings of longitudinal projects, especially since participation may affect different informants to differing degrees (cf. Keeves 1988:122).
24. This recommendation by Kasper/Dahl (1991:226) is based on the finding that responses of homogeneous groups elicited using a discourse completion task, the primary instrument employed in the present study, tend to concentrate around a few subcategories, thus rendering larger samples unnecessary.
25. One of the students in the research project had been awarded a scholarship by the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (German Academic Exchange Service, original translation (DAAD)). Cf. also 3.3.2.1 on such scholarships. In addition, two scholarships are awarded by University College Dublin each year to students studying abroad. One of the Arts students participating in the research had been awarded such a scholarship.
26. The remaining twenty-six students either did not wish to participate in the project, were not present during the initial data collections sessions, or were excluded from the study for reasons of non-homogeneity based on information obtained via a pre-year abroad questionnaire (cf. 4.1.1.2 on the grounds of exclusion).
27. The initial differentiation made between Arts and Commerce students was due to the fact that individual differences between students of different study backgrounds had been found by Walsh (1995), for example. However, given that the present study is quantitative rather than case-study based, such differences are not addressed in the final analysis.
28. A somewhat similar study to that suggested has been conducted by Kaplan (1989) into the actual tasks for which and occasions when her study abroad informants actually used French — however, a specifically speech-act based study has not been carried out to date to the best of my knowledge.
29. Request studies focusing on English as the L2 include those by Bardovi-Harlig/Dörnyei (1998), Bilbow (1995), Carrell (1981), Carrell/Konneker (1981), Cenoz/Valencia (1996), Chang/Hsu (1998), Edmondson/House (1991), Ellis (1992), Faerch/Kasper (1989), Fukushima (1990b), Hartford/Bardovi-Harlig (1996), Hill (1997), House (1989a), House/Kasper (1981, 1987), Kasanga (1998, 1999), Rintell (1979, 1981), Rintell/Mitchell (1989), Rose (2000), Sasaki (1998), Scarcella (1979a), Schmidt (1983), Shimamura (1993), Suh (1999), Takahashi (1993, 1996), Takahashi/

DuFon (1989), Tanaka (1988), Tanaka/Kawade (1982), Trosborg (1995), Walters (1979), F. Yu (1998) and M.-C. Yu (1999). Finally, recent cross-cultural research conducted into request realisations focusing on English includes studies by Dorodnych (1995), Eslamirasekh (1993), Márquez Reiter (2000) and Rinnert/Kobayashi (1999). Hong (1998) looks at request patterns in German. Other target languages which have been researched to a certain degree include Chinese (Hong 1998), Hebrew (cf. Blum-Kulka 1982, 1983, 1991, Blum-Kulka/Levenston 1987, Blum-Kulka/Olshtain 1986, Blum-Kulka/Sheffer 1993 and Weizman 1993), Japanese (cf. Yamashita 1996), Spanish (cf. Cenoz/Valencia 1996, Koike 1989) and Indonesian (cf. Hassall 1997, 2001).

30. For further information on gift offering, the reader is referred to research by Zhu (1998) and Zhu et al. (1998, 1999) on gift offering and acceptance in China.

31. Further studies focusing on offers include only those by Fukushima (1990b) and Kasper (1981:140ff), both of which deal with English as a foreign language. Aijmer (1996:189ff), Davidson (1984, 1990), Edmondson/House (1981:136f), Fukushima (1990a,b) and Fukushima/Iwata (1987) have produced work on English NS offers, as has Wierzbicka (1985:147f) on Australian English offers. Finally, Chen et al. (1995) address offers in Chinese to a limited extent in their discussion on ritual refusals.

32. Further forms of offers include offers made following an offence and offers made following a request — in both of these cases the offer functions as a *Contra* in the interactional structure (cf. Edmondson/House 1981:137f).

33. Ballmer/Brennenstuhl (1981:82) list both “refuse” and “reject” as possible reactions to offers, but do not explicitly differentiate between these options since the categorisation is based on dictionary entries, which themselves do not draw a clear distinction. Indeed, the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) (1992) uses both terms in relation to offers, as well as the term “decline”. Here the lexical entry “reject” yields “to refuse (something offered); to decline to receive or accept” (3.a.), while the entry “refuse” produces “to decline to take or accept (something offered or presented); to reject the offer of (a thing)” (2.) (s.v. OED “reject”, “refuse”). In addition, “decline” is defined as “not to accept (something offered); implying polite or courteous refusal” (13.c.) (s.v. OED “decline”).

A further differentiation of such terms is offered by Wierzbicka (1987:93ff) who, in her lexical classification of illocutionary verbs, associates the term “decline” with offers. She argues that “refuse” is more suitable to requests. She suggests that “A person who *refuses* to do something makes it painfully clear to the addressee that he ‘won’t do it’ because he doesn’t want to do it” (Wierzbicka 1987:94, original emphasis), and so emphasises the conflict between the speaker and the hearer. A reject, on the other hand, is rather associated with claims and demands as it “... doesn’t attribute to the first speaker a desire for a verbal response, and therefore it doesn’t pretend that it complies to any extent with the first speaker’s wishes” (Wierzbicka 1987:97). Declines, in contrast, are not as harsh since they address the conditional nature of offers and invitations. In other words, the speaker knows that the offerer or inviter does not take it for granted that the offer/invitation will be accepted. As a result, the degree of surprise and threat to the hearer’s positive face is not large.

In the cross-cultural and speech act literature, however, the terms “refusal of offer”, and to a lesser extent “reject”, are employed. The term “decline” has, to my knowledge, not been used to date. A possible reason is that refusals are often dealt with as one irregardless of Initiating move. Given this inconsistency in terminology, it was decided to adopt the term “refusal” in this study in an effort to achieve comparability with previous research.

34. Cf. Beebe et al. (1990), Edmondson/House (1981), Gass/Houck (1999), Houck/Gass (1996), Kasper (1981), Robinson (1992) and Sasaki (1998) on interlanguage research on refusals of offers for English as the L2 and Beckers (1999), Davidson (1984, 1990) and Kana (1982) on English NS

refusals of offers. Turnbull (2001) has done work on refusals of requests — however the focus here is rather methodological. In addition, refusals of offers in Chinese as a foreign/second language has recently gained some attention (e.g., Chen et al. 1995), and Margalef-Boada (1993) has examined the production of refusals of offers by German learners of Spanish. Even studies of German NS realisations of refusals are rare. To my knowledge, only Beckers (1999), Margalef-Boada (1993) and Möhl (1996), all unpublished theses, have investigated German NS realisations of this speech act. However, Möhl (1996) does not deal with refusals of offers.

35. Several other examples of this nature are to be found in the “Father Ted” series, for example in “Competition Time” (Father Ted 1996b) where Mrs. Doyle, the priests’ housekeeper, offers a guest a glass of sherry, in “The Mainland” (Father Ted 1998) where Mrs. Doyle tries to insist on paying for a friend of hers in a coffee shop and, finally, in “Hell, The second sermon” (Father Ted 1997), where Mrs. Doyle offers Father Ted, one of the three priests she looks after, a bun.

36. Pragmatic routines are referred to in the literature using a variety of terms, some of which encompass only pragmatic routines, others which also include other formulaic language. Examples include “conversational routines” (Coulmas 1981:2), “formulas” (Bahns et al. 1986), “formulaic expressions” (Sawyer 1992:104), “formulaic sequences” (Wray 2000:465), “formulaic speech” (Ellis 1985:167), “frozen routines” (Kasper 1989b:43), “gambits” (Wildner-Bassett 1986a,b:145), “interpersonal idiomatic expressions” (Fernando 1996), “linguistic routines” (Laver 1981), “politeness formulas” (Ferguson 1976), “pragmatic formulae” (Kasper/Schmidt 1996:155), “pragmatic routines” (Kasper 1995a), “pre-coded pieces and routines” (Herbert 1991), “prefabricated patterns” (Hakuta 1974), “routines” (Edmondson 1989), “situation-bound utterances” (SBUs) (Kecskés 1999) and “verbal routines” (Scarcella 1979b:79).

My choice of the term “pragmatic routine” reflects the pragmatic rather than structural focus of the present study. Readers are referred to Aijmer (1996:12ff), Nattinger/DeCarrico (1992:38ff) and Wray (1999:214ff) for an overview of research from a structural perspective.

37. It should, however, be noted that Bergman/Kasper (1993:101), in a study into native speaker/learner apologies using a DCT, refute this suggestion, stating that, while their learners did waffle, they did not do so in an effort to compensate for a paucity of apology pragmatic routines, a finding emphasising the need for further research in this area.

38. Although, as noted in 3.4.2, native speakers often view learners’ emulation of linguistic forms which reflect group membership negatively, it seems that pragmatic routines may, despite also reflecting identity, represent an exception in this regard since, as solutions to recurring face-threatening situations, their appropriate employment is a very basic and necessary part of linguistic behaviour in a particular community.

39. Although “*bitte*”/“please” could have been analysed as a pragmatic routine (cf. 4.4.1.2), which, despite semantic and functional equivalence in both the L1 and L2, causes pragmatic difficulties for learners due to a tendency towards overgeneralisation, it was decided, instead, to analyse this politeness marker in the context of its mitigating function, as it is this rather than pragmatic transfer which will be shown to be the primary source of learner pragmatic error. Furthermore, the contrast between learners’ use of the politeness marker “*bitte*” (please) in request realisations and that of downtoners, also a lexical and phrasal downgrader, provides interesting insights into the pragmatic development of learners’ interlanguage over time.

40. It should be noted that the term “downtoner” here refers to a specific type of lexical and phrasal downgrader (cf. Appendix 10.2.1). This understanding differs from that of Holmes (1984:359) who uses “downtoner” as a broad cover term for lexical devices used to attenuate illocutionary force. Holmes’ use of the term includes, for example, such linguistic elements, as “I guess/suppose” (termed subjectivizers by Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b:284), and also forms referred

to by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989b:288) as imposition minimisers (e.g., forms such as “if you wouldn’t mind”).

41. “*Vielleicht*” represents one exception since it is a modal sentence adverbial rather than a mitigating modal particle when occurring in non-rhetorical yes-no questions — as, for example, in requests (cf. Helbig 1994: 230, Jiang 1994: 44f).

The reader is referred to Helbig (1994: 32ff passim) for a detailed overview of the characteristics of modal particles.

42. Cf. also Harden/Rösler (1981) who found that informants with no knowledge of German judged speech with and without German particles in the same way as native speakers of German, i.e., speakers who used modal particles appeared to both groups to be friendlier and more emotional than those who omitted the particles. Harden/Rösler (1981:72) believe that this result suggests that the absence of particles in German speech has an unnatural effect.

43. “*Doch*” can, for example, mean “yes” in response to a negative question. It can, however, also be employed as a co-ordinating conjunction, as in “*Ich wollte an den Strand, doch es fing an zu regnen*” (I wanted to go down to the beach, but it started to rain).

44. Cf. Babbie/Halley (1995), Howitt/Cramer (1999) and Norusis (1995) on the use of this software.

45. House/Kasper (1981:177) note that hesitators are often used in English where downtoners appear in German. Hence downtoners in the present data are rendered as hesitations in the translations provided (cf., e.g., Appendix 10.2.1).

Chapter 5

1. The suggestion is further supported in the metapragmatic analysis which follows and also in the investigation of the linguistic form of the reoffers which occur in the present data. In these analyses, the ritual status of “Are you sure?” in Irish English and indeed in the present learners’ reoffers is highlighted (cf. 5.2.1).

2. Indeed, apart from such transfer on the level of the exchange structure due to such cross-cultural differences, the analysis of the present data also shows learners to transfer their use of modification in refusing offers from Irish English to German. Use of such modification, however, differs in these two languages — Irish English NS upgrading their initial refusal to a lesser extent than German NS. It is suggested, that such differences stem from the fact that an individual realising an initial refusal in Irish English is awaiting a reoffer — consequently, there is no need to be particularly forceful in refusing an initiative offer — after all, the offer itself is not conventionally regarded as sincere until a reoffer has been issued. In the German speech community, however, initial refusals are not of a ritual nature — hence the larger use of upgraders. Such issues will be discussed in a future paper.

3. Although a question concerning directness was included on the post-year abroad questionnaire and not on the pre-year abroad questionnaire, it is believed that the effect of this question on the responses documented here was minimal, as the question concerning directness appeared five questions after the request to suggest labels to describe the German people.

4. This conversation was actually elicited upon retrospection concerning an apology situation, in which the learner was required to apologise for being late. In the course of response concerning adoption of the L2 norm, the informant herself introduced the topic of cross-cultural differences in offer-refusal exchanges and the adoption of such norms.

5. During my own year abroad experience and later sojourns in Germany, I often experienced such incidents myself, and indeed heard others complain of similar occurrences. Klaus P. Schneider (personal communication) also reports that Irish students detailed such pragmatic failure when asked within the framework of a third-year seminar on Intercultural Communication to recount critical incidents which they had experienced during time spent in the target speech community.
6. This finding regarding transfer of the L2 offer-refusal exchange structure into the L1 supports previous suggestions by Olshtain/Blum-Kulka (1985:304) that the L2 pragmatic norm may replace the L1 pragmatic norm in some instances in the learners' L1, and also research findings for bilinguals (cf. Blum-Kulka/Sheffer 1993:197 passim and Yoon 1991:87ff).
7. Coulmas (1979:256) and Richards/Sukwiwat (1983:115) give the example of "*Guten Appetit!*" in German as having no equivalent in English. A loose translation of this pragmatic routine, e.g. "Enjoy your meal", while reflecting the literal meaning, is inadequate because in English, it is not usual for individuals to wish each other a good appetite or "Enjoy your meal" before eating. "*Bon appétit*" is the nearest equivalent but this form is not widespread in Ireland, at least. Consequently, French learners of German, are likely to find it easier to master this routine via positive transfer than Irish learners of German who have to consciously remember to use it when the occasion demands. Conversely, German learners of English may attempt to render an English version of "*Guten Appetit.*"
8. A further example of a problematic routine for German learners of English in this category is the German phrase "*wie gesagt*", which literally translates as "as I said/told you". In English this routine has, as House (1993a:171) aptly notes, "...a rather petulant and needlessly aggressive overtone..." in some contexts in contrast to German, where it is rather meaningless, playing a role in coherence relative to previous discourse stretches. In other words, although the semantic content is the same, the illocutionary force is different in German and English.
9. As the participants in this study were not specifically requested to write a complete dialogue for each situation but simply asked to refuse the particular offer in question and to write as much as they felt necessary to complete this task, not all participants included a response to a refusal. As a result, it was necessary here to calculate the number of times a response to a refusal was actually included in the elicited dialogues. Since only 12.6% of all dialogues elicited for the work experience situation in L(1) included a Minimize, this situation was omitted from any further analysis.
10. Indeed, quite the opposite is the case as clearly seen in Table A13–5, Appendix 13. In the present corpus the IrEng NS are found to employ gratitude to a somewhat lower extent in realisations of refusals of offers than the present German NS in five of the six situations under investigation — the exception being the maths situation, where levels are approximately equal. A possible explanation for the difference in these findings from those suggested by Edmondson/House (1981:163) may be that the English NS data in the present study is of a different variety. Alternatively, the differences could be due to the fact that we are concentrating here exclusively on expressions of gratitude in refusal of offer realisations.
11. Given the longitudinal focus of the present study, this analysis is preliminary in nature. Further investigations are necessary. A search of a corpus, such as the British National Corpus (BNC) for spoken English (written also included) (cf. British National Corpus) and the *Freiburger Korpus* of the *Institut für Deutsche Sprache* (IDS) (Institute for German language) in Mannheim for spoken German, would be a possible way of further investigating this issue (cf. *Freiburger Korpus* (fko)).
12. I am relying on NS intuitions as regards the use of "*Kein Problem*" in this function in German.

13. The findings point to the importance of taking the wider discourse context into account when conducting investigations of Minimizes and indeed other speech acts — a methodological necessity which has been widely disregarded to date.
14. Only the initiative offer is analysed here since reoffers often take a conventionalised form, e.g. “are you sure?” (cf. 5.2.1). In such instances, syntactic downgrading is not of relevance.
15. In the police situation, there are comparatively large differences recorded in the level of syntactic downgraders employed by the German NS and IrEng NS. These are suggested to stem, at least in part, from the cross-culturally different weightings of the contextual elements in this situation: The level of social dominance in this situation is “higher” for the German NS and only “a little higher” for the IrEng NS. As a result, syntactic mitigation is not as important in the German context in this situation (cf. Figure 11). Indeed, it was also found that the number of lexical and phrasal downgraders in this situation in the IrEng NS data was higher than in the German NS data (cf. 5.3.2.2.2).
16. The combination of negation of preparatory conditions with interrogative is not relevant in the present analysis due to the concentration on conventionally indirect strategies. The interrogative is only coded where it is not obligatory as, for example, with locution derivable strategies.
17. Although also a standard situation, the application form situation exhibits a higher level of syntactic downgraders than the remaining two standard situations (the police and kitchen situations) due to the fact that this is not as “pure” a standard situation as the others.
18. Blum-Kulka/Levenston (1987:163) note an increased forcefulness of “please” in the initial position in Hebrew. They explain this by the fact that the adverb “please” in Hebrew is derived from the root of the verb meaning “to request”. As a result, “please” suggests to a certain extent the formal explicit performative strategy “I am requesting you to...” Since the German, “*bitte*” (please), is also derived from the verb “to request” in German (“*bitten*”), the same may be said of the effect of this adverb in initial position.
19. It should be noted that the present analysis, although it focuses on conventionally indirect head act strategies in the interest of consistency with other areas of analysis (e.g., 5.3.1), is comparable with the data referred to here using query preparatory strategies, since conventionally indirect strategies consist of only query preparatory and suggestory formulae (cf. Appendix 10.1) — the latter of which do not occur to any great extent in the present data in any dataset.
20. Trosborg (1995:258) explains the lack of overgeneralisation of this politeness marker with reference to the standard nature of the situations she employed.

Chapter 6

1. Cf. Kasper (1997a,c:122, 2000c:385ff, 2001) and Tateyama et al. (1997:166) for an overview on studies on the teachability/learnability of L2 pragmatics.
2. While Rose (1994, 1997) puts forward some general ideas in this area, Rose (1999), concentrating on request realisations as an example, provides a step-by-step program of ideas on how to teach pragmatic awareness to EFL students. Cf. also Judd (1999:158).
3. The validity of employing the language of films in teaching pragmatics has been investigated by Rose (2001) in a study contrasting compliments and compliment responses in film and naturally-occurring speech. In this study, validity was found to be higher on a pragmalinguistic than a sociopragmatic level. However, it remains a recommendable resource for purposes of awareness-raising.

4. Cf. Bardovi-Harlig (1996), Bardovi-Harlig et al. (1991) and Olshtain/Cohen (1990:45) for analyses of the presentation of requests, conversational closings and apologies respectively in current English-language textbooks.

Appendix

1. This distracter was only included in the questionnaire employed to elicit L(3) data. Its function was to in some way distract students from what they had written in the questionnaire before they proceeded to participate in a roleplay based on a selection of the previous items completed (cf. 4.1.2).
2. The bag situation here illustrates the format of the offer/refusal assessment items while the telephone situation represents that of the request situations.
3. The bracketed figures () here represent the values calculated in the CCSARP assessment questionnaire (cf. Blum-Kulka/House 1989: 141). These values were calculated on a scale of 1–3, where 1 was the lowest point (as is the case in the present 5 point scale) and 3 the highest. In the present study, these values were recalculated using a 5 point scale to enable a rank ordering of all request situations. These revised values are presented without brackets.
4. Cf. previous endnote.

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Appendix

Appendix 1. Pre-year abroad questionnaire

PRE-YEAR ABROAD QUESTIONNAIRE
To be completed by 1997/1998 year abroad students
Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS

Part 1: Personal Details

Name:Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

Date of birth:Age:

Nationality:

Father's nationality:Mother's Nationality:

Did you attend an all-Irish school (i.e., a Gaelscoil)? Yes ☐ No ☐

Primary school attended:

Secondary school attended:

Leaving Certificate (year):

Part 2: Language Skills

2.1 What is your mother tongue?
(If brought up bilingual/multilingual, please specify other languages)

2.2 Have you ever learnt any other language besides German (including Irish)? If so, please complete the following tables:

Language	Near-native	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor

Language	Number of years studying the language

2.3 Please give details of extended periods (i.e., 3 weeks or over) spent in non-German speaking countries outside Ireland.

<u>From</u> (mth, year) <u>to</u> (mth, year)	<u>Total duration</u> (in mths)	<u>Location</u>	<u>Purpose</u>

2.4 Since when have you been learning German?

2.4.1 Did you learn German in school? Yes ☐ No ☐

2.4.2 If so, for how many years?

2.4.3 What was your Leaving Certificate grade? (Please also specify pass or honours)

2.5 Besides German, what other subject(s) are you currently studying at UCD?

2.5.1 What subject did you drop after first year? (applies to Arts students only)

2.6 What was your main reason for choosing to study German at UCD?

Please tick the reason that most applies to you.

- (a) I wanted to learn as much as possible about the German language and culture ☐
- (b) I felt having German would enhance my employment opportunities ☐
- (c) I plan to travel/live abroad and German offers good opportunities ☐
- (d) I was undecided at the time of subject choices, so chose German ☐
- (e) I wanted to learn a language ☐
- (f) I was good at German and liked it ☐
- (g) Other ☐

2.7 Time spent in a German-speaking country: (Please complete the following table)

From (mth, year) to (mth, year)	Location? (town/city, country)	Total duration	Form of stay (organised/ private exchange/holiday/ language course/other)	Purpose	Alone or with family?

2.8 Do you read German books/magazines or listen to German radio/T. V. regularly (outside of language/literature class)? Yes ☐ No ☐

2.8.1 If so, how often?

2.9 How much do you know about Germany (the country, current affairs, systems, etc.)?A lot ☐ A reasonable amount ☐ A little ☐ Very little ☐**2.9.1 Where did/do you acquire any information you have?****2.10 How difficult do you find German? (Please tick)**Very difficult ☐ Difficult ☐ Of average difficulty ☐Of less than average difficulty ☐ Not difficult ☐**2.11 How would you rate your present knowledge of German? (Please tick)**Near-native ☐ Very good ☐ Good ☐Fair ☐ Poor ☐ Very poor ☐**Part 3: Cultural differences:****3.1 Do you know any Germans?** Yes ☐ No ☐**3.1.1 If so, how much contact do you have with them?****3.1.1.1 What language do you mostly talk to them in? (give approximate percentage of each language, if appropriate)****3.2 What labels would you use to describe the German people?****3.3 Do you think the Germans have a different mentality/culture to the Irish?**

If so, please give reasons/examples.

3.3.1 Do you think that any of the differences you mentioned above manifest themselves in the way the Germans/Irish use language? Please give details.**Part 4: Year Abroad****4.1 What are your reasons for going abroad?**Please rate the reasons given below on a scale of 1 to 6 in the order in which they apply to you (1 = most applicable, 6 = least applicable).

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| (a) To improve my German | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (b) To get to know Germans | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (c) To experience the German culture | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (d) To have a good time | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (e) To become more independent/mature | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| (f) To meet lots of interesting people | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4.2 How are you financing your year abroad?ERASMUS ☐ PAD ☐ Other (Please give details) ☐

4.3 Please give details of planned stay:

Place, Country	From (approx. day, month, year)	To (approx. day, month, year)

4.4 Which of the following most accurately describes your attitude to the year abroad?

(Please tick)

- (a) I'm looking forward to my year abroad☐
- (b) I'm nervous about my year abroad☐

Appendix 2. Post-year abroad questionnaire

POST-YEAR ABROAD QUESTIONNAIRE

To be completed by 1997/1998 Year Abroad Students

Part 1: Year Abroad

1.1 Name:

1.2 How long in total were you away from a German-speaking environment since October 1997?

1.3 On average, how regularly did you read German books/magazines/newspapers in your free-time during your year abroad? (Please tick)

More than 7 hours a week ☐ Between 3 and 7 hours a week ☐
More than 1 and less than 3 hours a week ☐ One hour or less a week ☐ Never ☐

1.4 On average, how regularly did you listen to German radio/T. V. during your year abroad?

More than 7 hours a week ☐ Between 3 and 7 hours a week ☐
More than 1 and less than 3 hours a week ☐ One hour or less a week ☐ Never ☐

1.5 Did you participate in a German language course during your year abroad?

Yes ☐ No ☐

1.5.1 If so, please complete the following table:

Number of hours per week?	
Duration of course?	
Focus of class (texts/oral/written/listening/grammar/translation/German for Business/...)?	

1.6 Did you engage in any private study of the German language during your year abroad? Yes ☐ No ☐

1.6.1 If yes, please give brief details.

1.7 As accurately as possible, please outline in percentages how much of your time in Germany you spent:

- (a) Speaking German with German native speakers:
- (b) Speaking German with non-native speakers of German:
- (c) Speaking English with English native speakers:
- (d) Speaking English with non-native speakers of English:

1.8 How difficult do you find German? (Please tick)

Very difficult ☐ Difficult ☐ Of average difficulty ☐
Of less than average difficulty ☐ Not difficult ☐

1.9 How would you rate your present knowledge of German? (Please tick)Near-native ☐ Very good ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor ☐ Very poor ☐**Part 2: Cultural differences**

The purpose of the following questions is to tap general, prototypical views. As a result, you will be asked various questions pertaining to “the German and Irish people”, despite the fact that these concepts are, of course, broad generalisations.

2.1 What labels would you use to describe the German people?**2.2 Has your opinion of the German people changed during your year abroad?**Yes ☐ No ☐**Please comment:****2.3 What labels would you use to describe the Irish people?****2.4 Do you regard the German people as being:**

- (a) A lot more polite than Irish people ☐
- (b) A little more polite than Irish people ☐
- (c) Just as polite as Irish people ☐
- (d) A little less polite than Irish people ☐
- (e) A lot less polite than Irish people ☐

2.4.1 Please explain your answer:**2.5 Do you think the German people are in general:**

- (a) A lot more direct than Irish people ☐
- (b) A little more direct than Irish people ☐
- (c) Just as direct/indirect as Irish people ☐
- (d) A little less direct than Irish people ☐
- (e) A lot less direct than Irish people ☐

2.5.1 If you do detect any differences in directness, how do you evaluate them?

- (a) Positive ☐ (b) With indifference ☐
- (c) Negative ☐ (d) It depends ☐

Please comment:**2.5.2 Which of the following statements applies to you in general?**

- (a) I am more direct when I speak German ☐
- (b) I am less direct when I speak German ☐
- (c) I am just as direct/indirect speaking German as English ☐
- (d) I do not notice any difference ☐

2.6 If you see differences in politeness between Irish and German people, do you, as a second language learner of German, regard it necessary to adopt the direct/indirect ways of the Germans? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please comment:

2.7 When speaking German to Germans, do you ever consciously emphasise your Irish nationality/non-German nationality? Yes ☐ No ☐

2.7.1 If so, please explain when and why?

2.8 Do you think you were well informed about cultural differences between Irish and German people before your year abroad? Please comment.

2.9 If the opportunity should arise, would you like to return to Germany? Yes ☐ No ☐

2.9.1 If not, please explain, why not.

Thank you for your time!

Appendix 3. Situational descriptions

Table A3–1. Offers — Situational descriptions

Offer Situation	Synopsis of Situation
Accident	Following an accident, the driver of the car (a priest) offers to bring student to hospital
Beverage	Student offers uncle refreshments
Lift	After guest-lecture, professor offers students lift home
Work experience	Student offers to help new boss's son with economics
Bag	Student offers stranger of same age help carrying suitcases in airport
Maths	Student offers friend help in maths before an exam

Table A3–2. Refusal of offers — Situational descriptions

Refusal Situation	Synopsis of Situation
Accident	Following an accident, student refuses driver's (priest's) offer of lift to hospital
Beverage	Uncle refuses student's offer of refreshments
Lift	After guest-lecture, students refuse offer of lift home from professor
Work experience	New boss refuses student's offer of help for son with economics
Bag	Stranger of same age refuses student's offer of help to carry suitcases in airport
Maths	Friend refuses student's offer of help in maths before an exam

Table A3–3. Requests — Situational descriptions

Request Situation	Synopsis of Situation
Kitchen	After party, student requests flat-mate to clean kitchen
Telephone ^a	Girl requests stranger for change for telephone
Notes	Student requests notes from friend
Drive	Man requests colleague/neighbour for drive home
Application ^a	Student requests application form from personnel manager
Police	Policeman requests woman to move car
Grammar ^a	Student requests help from lecturer in understanding grammar
Presentation	Lecturer requests student to change date of presentation

^a not an original CCSARP situation

Appendix 4. Glossary of vocabulary for FDCT/DCT

Table A4–1. Vocabulary list for production questionnaires

ablehnen	to refuse
Ablehnung	refusal
Angebot	offer
angefahren werden (mit dem Rad von einem Auto angefahren werden)	to be knocked down (to be knocked off a bike by a car)
Aufzeichnungen	lecture notes
außer Haus sein	to be out of the office
Das hat mich getroffen	I felt hurt by that (personally)
Gastvortrag	guest lecture
gekränkt	annoyed
jdm etwas anbieten	to offer s.o. sth.
jdm etwas ausrichten	to take a message
Klausur	exam
kurzfristig	short notice
Personalchef	personnel manager
Pfarrer	priest
Referat	class presentation
Rettungswagen	ambulance
schuldbewußt	feeling guilty
sich bereit erklären, etwas zu machen	to offer to do sth.
sich etwas ausleihen	to borrow sth.
sich verabreden	to arrange to meet
Sitzung	meeting (business)/lecture (college)
stoßen gegen jdn	to bump into s.o.
Umstände	circumstances
Verhältnis	relationship
Versehen	mistake
versehentlich	by mistake
Versicherung	insurance
zufällig	by chance

Appendix 5. Free discourse completion task (FDCT)/Discourse completion task (DCT)

DEUTSCHER FRAGEBOGEN, DEUTSCHLAND

Bitte vervollständige folgende Informationen:

- 1. Alter:
- 2. Geschlecht: männlich ☐ weiblich ☐
- 3. Geburtsort:
- 4. Ist Deutsch Deine Muttersprache? ja ☐ nein ☐
(Bitte mehrere Sprachen angeben, falls bilingual/multilingual erzogen)

Teil I:
ES WERDEN IM FOLGENDEN VERSCHIEDENE SITUATIONEN BESCHRIEBEN.
BITTE SCHREIBE FÜR JEDE DIESER SITUATIONEN EINEN DIALOG. ACHTE DARAUF, AUFZUSCHREIBEN, WAS DU UND DEIN GESPRÄCHSPARTNER IN DER ANGEgebenEN SITUATION SAGEN WÜRDET.

LIES DIR JEDEN TEXT ERST GANZ DURCH, BEVOR DU DEINE ANTWORT AUFSCHREIBST. VERGISS NICHT, DIE UMSTÄNDE, UNTER DENEN DER DIALOG STATTFINDET, UND DAS VERHÄLTNIS ZWISCHEN DEN TEILNEHMERN ZU BEACHTEN.

SCHREIBE SO VIEL, WIE DU FÜR NÖTIG HÄLTST.

1. Du wirst auf dem Weg zur Uni mit dem Rad von einem Auto angefahren. Der Fahrer des Autos, ein Pfarrer, erklärt sich bereit, Dich ins Krankenhaus zu fahren. Du fühlst Dich jedoch in Ordnung und LEHNST SEIN ANGEBOT AB.
Pfarrer: Es tut mir wirklich leid. Geht's Ihnen gut?
Du: Ja, es geht.
Pfarrer:
Du:

:
:
:
:
:

2. Du bist allein zu Hause. Dein Onkel ist zufällig in der Umgebung und kommt vorbei. Du bittest ihn herein und bietest ihm eine Tasse Kaffee an. Er LEHNT DEIN ANGEBOT AB.

Onkel: Hallo, wie geht's?

Du: Hallo Onkel Manfred. Komm rein. Leider ist heute keiner da.

Onkel:

:
:
:
:
:
:

3. Nach einem Gastvortrag spricht einer Deiner Professoren mit Dir und einer Freundin von Dir. Es ist Zeit, nach Hause zu fahren. Dein Professor erinnert sich daran, daß Ihr beide in seiner Nähe wohnt. Er erklärt sich bereit, Euch mit nach Hause zu nehmen. Du LEHNST SEIN ANGEBOT für Dich und Deine Freundin AB.

Professor: Also, ich glaube, es wird langsam Zeit für mich, nach Hause zu fahren

Du:

:
:
:
:
:
:

4. Du hast gerade ein Praktikum bei einer großen Firma angefangen. Du bist bereits zwei Tage in der Firma. Während einer Kaffeepause hörst Du zufällig, wie Deine neue Chefin über ihren Sohn und seine Schwierigkeiten in der Schule mit dem Fach Wirtschaft spricht. Da Du Wirtschaft studierst, bietest Du ihr Hilfe an. Sie LEHNT DEIN ANGEBOT AB.

Du:

Chefin:

:
:
:
:
:
:

5. Du bist am Flughafen. Du siehst eine Frau in Deinem Alter mit zwei riesigen Koffern. Da Du selbst wenig Gepäck hast, bietest Du ihr Hilfe an. Sie LEHNT DEIN ANGEBOT AB.

Du:

Frau:

:
:
:
:
:
:

6. Das Matheexamen am Ende des Semesters findet nächste Woche statt. Martin, ein guter Freund von Dir, erwähnt, daß er sich darüber Sorgen macht, da er Mathe schwierig findet. Du bietest ihm Hilfe an, aber er LEHNT DEIN ANGEBOT AB.

Martin: Ach, ich habe schreckliche Angst vor diesem Matheexamen nächste Woche. Ich falle bestimmt durch, ich habe keine Ahnung davon.

Du:

Martin:

:
:
:
:
:

TEIL II

BEI JEDER DER FOLGENDEN SITUATIONEN FEHLT IM DIALOG EIN SATZ. BITTE SETZE DEN FEHLENDEN SATZ EIN, UND ZWAR SO, DASS ER IN DEN TEXT ALS GANZEN PASST.

LIES DIR JEDEN TEXT ERST GANZ DURCH, BEVOR DU DEINE ANTWORT AUFSCHREIBST UND VERGISS NICHT DIE UMSTÄNDE, UNTER DENEN DER DIALOG STATTFINDET, UND DAS VERHÄLTNIS ZWISCHEN DEN TEILNEHMERN ZU BEACHTEN.

1. IN EINER STUDENTENWOHNUNG

Lutz, der mit Helmut eine Wohnung teilt, hatte gestern abend eine Party und hat die Küche in einem chaotischen Zustand hinterlassen.

Helmut: Lutz! Nicole und Jens kommen heute abend zum Essen, und ich muß bald mit dem Kochen anfangen. _____

Lutz: Okay, ich mach's gleich.

2. AN EINER TELEFONZELLE

Während Maria an einer Telefonzelle darauf wartet, kurz zu Hause anzurufen, bemerkt sie, daß sie nicht genug Kleingeld bei sich hat. Sie beschließt, eine andere Frau, die neben ihr steht, um Kleingeld zu bitten.

Maria: _____

Frau: Tut mir leid, ich hab' nur zwanzig Pfennig klein und die brauch' ich selbst.

3. IN DER UNIVERSITÄT

Anne war vorgestern nicht im Seminar und möchte sich Judiths Aufzeichnungen ausleihen.

Anne: -----

Judith: Klar, aber ich möchte sie gern vor der Sitzung nächste Woche zurückhaben.

4. NACH EINER GEWERKSCHAFTSSITZUNG

Die Sitzung ist gerade vorbei. Peters Bus ist eben abgefahren, und der nächste kommt erst in einer Stunde. Peter weiß, daß die Leute neben ihm, die er nur so vom Sehen kennt, in der gleichen Straße wohnen wie er und daß sie mit dem Auto da sind.

Peter: -----

Frau: Tut mir leid, aber wir fahren nicht direkt nach Hause.

5. AM TELEFON

Georg hat gerade eine Anzeige für einen Job gesehen, den er gerne während der Semesterferien haben möchte. Er entscheidet sich, sich darum zu bewerben. Er ruft den Personalchef an, um ihn um ein Bewerbungsformular zu bitten.

Personalchef: Höchst AG. Personal. Pertl am Apparat. Guten Morgen.

Georg: Guten Morgen. Mein Name ist Georg Kraus. Ich rufe bezüglich Ihrer Anzeige für Sommerjobs an. -----

Personalchef: Natürlich. Ich schicke Ihnen sofort eins zu.

6. AUF DER STRASSE

Sabine fährt in die Stadt. Plötzlich sieht sie an der Straße ein brennendes Haus. Sie parkt ihr Auto am Straßenrand. Als sie gerade auf das Haus zugeht, hält ein Polizist sie an.

Polizist: -----

----- Der Rettungswagen muß jede Minute hier sein.

Sabine: Ja natürlich, ich fahr' sofort weg.

7. BEIM DOZENT

Petra konnte kürzlich wegen Krankheit nicht in die Uni gehen, deswegen hat sie Probleme, eine bestimmte grammatische Regel zu verstehen. Sie erklärt dies dem Dozent.

Dozent: Komm 'rein.

Petra: Hallo, tut mir leid, Sie zu stören.

Dozent: Kein Problem. Was kann ich für Dich tun?

Petra: Also, ich war letzte Woche krank und ich kann die Grammatik, die wir jetzt in der Stunde machen irgendwie nicht verstehen. _____

Dozent: Kein Problem, schau Dir dieses Buch hier an. Es ist ziemlich gut.

8. AM TELEFON

Brigitte Albers lehrt Alte Geschichte. Als sie die Seminarsitzungen für die nächsten paar Wochen vorbereitet, bemerkt sie, daß das Referat eines Studenten über die Staatstheorie des Aristoteles, welches in zwei Wochen dran wäre, eigentlich viel besser für die Sitzung nächste Woche passen würde. Sie ruft deshalb diesen Studenten, Thomas Bentinger, an.

Thomas B.: Thomas Bentinger.

Brigitte A.: Hallo, Thomas, hier ist Brigitte Albers. _____

Thomas B.: Ja also, es ist zwar ein bißchen kurzfristig, aber ich glaub' schon, daß ich's schaffen kann.

Teil III:¹

Bitte ergänze die Präpositionen und Pronomen

- a) Haben Sie fünf Minuten Zeit? Ich muß ____ ____ sprechen.
- b) Ich warte ____ Eingang auf Sie.
- c) Hier, ____ Fenster ist ein Tisch frei!
- d) Setzen wir uns ____ Fenster?
- e) Ein herrlicher Blick ____ den See!

Vielen Dank für Deine Mitarbeit.

ENGLISH QUESTIONNAIRE, IRELAND

Please fill in the following information:

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Age: | 2. Sex: | Male <input type="checkbox"/> | Female <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Place of birth: | 4. Nationality: | | |
| 5. Mother's nationality: | 6. Father's nationality: | | |
| 7. Native language(s): | | | |

(Please mention all languages, if brought up bilingual/multilingual)

PART I:

PLEASE WRITE A DIALOGUE FOR EACH OF THE SITUATIONS DESCRIBED BELOW, TAKING CARE TO FILL IN WHAT YOU AND THE PERSON YOU ARE TALKING TO WOULD SAY IN THE GIVEN SITUATION.

PLEASE NOTE CAREFULLY THE CIRCUMSTANCES DESCRIBED AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTICIPANTS.

YOU MAY WRITE AS MUCH AS YOU FEEL IS NECESSARY.

1. You are knocked off your bicycle by a car on your way to college. The driver of the car, a priest, offers to drive you to the hospital. However you feel fine and REFUSE.

Priest: I'm really sorry. Are you all right?

You: Yes, I'm fine.

Priest:

You:

:
:
:
:
:

2. You are alone in the house. Your uncle happens to be in the area and calls in. You invite him in and offer him a cup of tea. He REFUSES.

Uncle: Hello, how are you?

You: Hello Uncle Pat. Come on in. I'm afraid they are all away for the day

Uncle:

:
:
:
:
:

3. After a guest lecture, one of your professors is talking to you and a friend of yours. It is time to go home. Your professor remembers that you both live near him and so he offers you both a lift home. You REFUSE for both of you.

Professor: Well, I think it's about time I was getting home now.
.....

You:

:
:
:
:
:

4. You have just started a traineeship in a large company. During the coffee break on your second day you overhear your boss talking about how weak her son is at economics in school. As you study economics, you offer to help. She REFUSES.

You:

Boss:

:
:
:
:
:

5. You are in the airport. You see a girl your own age with two huge bags. As you haven't much luggage yourself, you offer to help. She REFUSES.

You:

Girl:

:
:
:
:

6. The end of term maths exam is next week. John, a good friend of yours, mentions that he's worried about it as he finds maths difficult. You offer to help him, but he REFUSES.

John: Oh, I'm dreading this maths exam next week. I'm going to fail it, I haven't a clue.

You:

John:

:
:
:
:
:

PART II:

ONE SENTENCE IS MISSING IN THE DIALOGUE IN EACH OF THE FOLLOWING SITUATIONS. PLEASE FILL IN THE MISSING SENTENCE, SO THAT IT FITS THE ENTIRE TEXT.

PLEASE READ THE SITUATION TO THE END BEFORE WRITING YOUR ANSWER AND BEAR IN MIND THE CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH THE DIALOGUE IS TAKING PLACE AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PARTICIPANTS.

1. IN A STUDENT FLAT

Declan, John's flatmate, had a party the night before and left the kitchen in a mess.

John: Declan, Louise and Niall are coming to dinner tonight and I'll have to get on with the cooking soon. _____

Declan: O.K. I'll get on with it now. _____

2. OUTSIDE A TELEPHONE BOOTH

At a public telephone booth while waiting to make a short call home, Maria realises that she doesn't have enough change for the call. She decides to ask another girl who's standing nearby for change.

Maria: _____

Girl: Sorry, I've only one twenty, and I need that myself. _____

3. AT THE UNIVERSITY

Anne missed a class the day before and would like to borrow Jane's notes.

Anne: _____

Jane: Sure, but let me have them back before the class next week. _____

4. AT A UNION MEETING

The meeting is over. Jack's bus has just left and the next one is not due for an hour. Jack knows that the couple next to him (who he knows by sight only) live in the same street as he does and that they have come by car.

Jack: _____

Woman: I'm sorry, but we're not going home straight away. _____

5. ON THE TELEPHONE

Jim has just seen an advertisement for a job he would like during the summer holidays and decides to apply. He rings up the personnel manager for an application form.

Personnel Manager: Personnel.

Jim: Good morning. My name is Jim Mulhall. I'm ringing in connection with your advertisement for summer jobs _____

Personnel Manager: Of course. I'll send one out straight away.

6. IN THE STREET

Margaret is driving into town when she notices a house on fire in front of her. She pulls into the side and parks and is walking towards the house when a policeman comes up to her.

Policeman: -----

----- We're expecting an ambulance to arrive any minute.
Margaret: Sure, I'll move it straight away.

7. IN A LECTURER'S ROOM

Mary has not been able to attend college recently due to ill health. As a result, she is having problems understanding a particular grammar point. She mentions her difficulties to the lecturer.

Lecturer: Come on in.
Mary: Hi, sorry to bother you.
Lecturer: No problem. What can I do for you?
Mary: Well, I was sick last week and somehow I can't seem to understand the grammar we're doing in class at the moment -----

Lecturer: No problem, take a look at this book here. It's quite good.

8. ON THE PHONE

Lisa Nolan teaches ancient history. When preparing her classes for the next few weeks, she realises that a paper which a student was due to present on Aristotle's theory of the state, which is due in two weeks' time, would fit in much better at next week's session. She decides to give this student, Tony, a ring.

Tony: Hello, 2314311.
Lisa: Hello, could I speak to Tony Graham, please?
Tony: Speaking.
Lisa: Hello Tony. This is Lisa Nolan. -----

Tony: Well, it is rather short notice, but I think I can get it done for next week.

Many thanks for your co-operation!

Appendix 6. Assessment questionnaire

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE, IRELAND

Please fill in the following information:

1. Age:

2. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

3. Nationality:

4. Is English your native language?

(Please give all languages, if brought up bilingual/multilingual)

PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS FOLLOWING EACH SITUATION DESCRIBED BELOW.

You are in the airport. You see a girl your own age with two huge bags. As you haven't much luggage yourself, you offer to help. She refuses.

(a) Do you find this situation difficult to imagine?	(b) How would you describe the situation?	(c) How well do you know the girl?	(d) What's your status compared to the girl's status?
Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	an everyday occurrence <input type="checkbox"/>	very well <input type="checkbox"/>	higher <input type="checkbox"/>
No <input type="checkbox"/>	relatively common <input type="checkbox"/>	well <input type="checkbox"/>	a little higher <input type="checkbox"/>
	would happen seldom <input type="checkbox"/>	fairly well <input type="checkbox"/>	same <input type="checkbox"/>
	would never happen <input type="checkbox"/>	not well <input type="checkbox"/>	a little lower <input type="checkbox"/>
		not at all <input type="checkbox"/>	lower <input type="checkbox"/>

DEUTSCHER FRAGEBOGEN, DEUTSCHLAND

Bitte vervollständige folgende Informationen:

1. Alter:
2. Geschlecht: männlich ☐ weiblich ☐
3. Geburtsort:
4. Ist Deutsch Deine Muttersprache? ja ☐ nein ☐
(Bitte mehrere Sprachen angeben, falls bilingual/multilingual erzogen)

ES WERDEN IM FOLGENDEN VERSCHIEDENE SITUATIONEN BESCHRIEBEN.
BITTE BEANTWORTE FÜR JEDE SITUATION DIE DARAUF FOLGENDEN FRAGEN.

Du bist am Flughafen. Du siehst eine Frau in Deinem Alter mit zwei riesigen Koffern. Da Du selbst wenig Gepäck hast, bietest Du ihr Hilfe an. Sie lehnt Dein Angebot ab.²

(a) Findest Du es schwierig, Dir diese Situation vorzustellen?	(b) Wie würdest Du diese Situation beschreiben?	(c) Wie gut kennst Du die Frau?	(d) Wie würdest Du Deinen Status gegenüber dem der Frau beschreiben?	(e) Fühlst Du Dich gezwungen, der Frau, Hilfe anzubieten?	(f) Fällt es der Frau schwer, Dein Angebot abzulehnen?
Ja <input type="checkbox"/> Nein <input type="checkbox"/>	Alltäglich <input type="checkbox"/> Kommt relativ häufig vor <input type="checkbox"/> Kommt selten vor <input type="checkbox"/> Kommt nie vor <input type="checkbox"/>	Sehr gut <input type="checkbox"/> Gut <input type="checkbox"/> Mittelmäßig <input type="checkbox"/> Nicht gut <input type="checkbox"/> Überhaupt nicht <input type="checkbox"/>	Höher <input type="checkbox"/> Etwas höher <input type="checkbox"/> Gleich <input type="checkbox"/> Etwas niedriger <input type="checkbox"/> Niedriger <input type="checkbox"/>	Auf jeden Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Ja <input type="checkbox"/> Eher <input type="checkbox"/> weniger <input type="checkbox"/> Nein <input type="checkbox"/> Überhaupt nicht <input type="checkbox"/>	Auf jeden Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Ja <input type="checkbox"/> Eher <input type="checkbox"/> weniger <input type="checkbox"/> Nein <input type="checkbox"/> Überhaupt nicht <input type="checkbox"/>

AN EINER TELEFONZELLE

Während Maria an einer Telefonzelle darauf wartet, kurz zu Hause anzurufen, bemerkt sie, daß sie nicht genug Kleingeld bei sich hat. Sie entscheidet sich, eine andere Frau, die neben ihr steht, um Kleingeld zu bitten.

(a) Findest Du es schwierig, Dir diese Situation vorzustellen?	(b) Wie würdest Du diese Situation beschreiben?	(c) Wie gut kennt Maria die andere Frau?	(d) Wie würdest Du Marias Status gegenüber dem der anderen Frau beschreiben?	(e) Hat Maria ein Recht darauf, die Bitte zu äußern?	(f) Fühlt sich die Frau dazu gezwungen, Marias Bitte zu erfüllen?
Ja <input type="checkbox"/> Nein <input type="checkbox"/>	Alltäglich <input type="checkbox"/> Kann vorkommen <input type="checkbox"/> Kommt selten vor <input type="checkbox"/> Total unrealistisch <input type="checkbox"/>	Sehr gut <input type="checkbox"/> Gut <input type="checkbox"/> Mittelmäßig <input type="checkbox"/> Nicht gut <input type="checkbox"/> Überhaupt nicht <input type="checkbox"/>	Höher <input type="checkbox"/> Etwas höher <input type="checkbox"/> Gleich <input type="checkbox"/> Etwas niedriger <input type="checkbox"/> Niedriger <input type="checkbox"/>	Auf jeden Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Ja <input type="checkbox"/> Eher weniger <input type="checkbox"/> Nein <input type="checkbox"/> Überhaupt nicht <input type="checkbox"/>	Auf jeden Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Ja <input type="checkbox"/> Eher <input type="checkbox"/> weniger <input type="checkbox"/> Nein <input type="checkbox"/> Überhaupt nicht <input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 7. Assessment of situations

Tables A7–1/A7–2. Assessment of realism of situations

Question posed: Do you find this situation difficult to imagine?

Answers: 1 = Yes, 2 = No

(i.e., 1 = unrealistic situation, 2 = realistic situation)

Table A7–1. Offer/refusal situations — Assessment of realism

	IrEng NS	German NS
Accident	1.89	1.96
Beverage	1.95	1.87
Lift	1.63	1.6
Work experience	1.56	1.65
Bag	1.79	1.91
Maths	1.74	1.96
AVERAGE	1.76	1.82

Table A7–2. Request situations — Assessment of realism

	IrEng NS	German NS ^a
Telephone	1.78	1.92
Application form	2	2
Grammar	1.95	1.92
Kitchen	1.9	—
Notes	2	—
Drive	1.7	—
Police	1.67	—
Presentation	1.7	—
AVERAGE	1.84	1.95

^a Given the availability of the CCSARP assessments, the German NS informants were only required to complete assessment items for the offer/refusal situations and the new request situations which had been developed. Consequently, information concerning the realism of the situations is not available for older CCSARP situations.

Tables A7–3/A7–4. Assessment of frequency of occurrence of situations
Question posed: How would you describe the situation?
Answers: 1 = an everyday occurrence, 2 = relatively common, 3 = seldom, 4 = would never happen

Table A7–3. Offer/refusal situations — Assessment of frequency of occurrence

	IrEng NS	German NS
Accident	2.42	2.39
Beverage	2.1	2.35
Lift	2.84	2.9
Work experience	2.78	2.56
Bag	2.47	1.83
Maths	2.42	1.84
AVERAGE	2.5	2.31

Table A7–4. Request situations — Assessment of frequency of occurrence

	IrEng NS	German NS ^a
Telephone	2.28	2.17
Application form	1.39	1.52
Grammar	1.9	1.84
Kitchen	1.7	—
Notes	1.3	—
Drive	2.45	—
Police	2.83	—
Presentation	2.64	—
AVERAGE	2.06	1.84

^a Cf. comment in Table A7–2.

Tables A7–5/A7–6. Assessment of social distance/social dominance

Social distance: Question concerned how well the offerer/requester knows his/her interlocutor.

Answers: 1 = not at all, 2 = not well, 3 = fairly well, 4 = well, 5 = very well

Social dominance: Question concerned the status of the offerer/requester relative to the interlocutor.

Answers: 1 = lower, 2 = a little lower, 3 = same, 4 = a little higher, 5 = higher

[] = ranking (starting with the highest values), () = CCSARP values (1–3 pt scale)³

Table A7–5. Offer/refusal situations — Assessment of social distance/social dominance (from point of view of offerer)

Offer situation	Social distance		Social dominance	
	IrEng NS	German NS	IrEng NS	German NS
Accident	1.7 [5]	1 [5/6]	3.79 [2]	3.3 [2]
Beverage	4.36 [1]	3.3 [2]	2.37 [5]	2.69 [5]
Lift	2.84 [3]	2.39 [3]	4.26 [1]	3.87 [1]
Work experience	2.44 [4]	2.13 [4]	2.28 [6]	1.78 [6]
Bag	1.16 [6]	1 [5/6]	3.05 [4]	2.96 [4]
Maths	4.26 [2]	4.08 [1]	3.32 [3]	3.2 [3]

Table A7–6. Request situations — Assessment of social distance/social dominance

Request situation	Social distance		Social dominance	
	IrEng NS	German NS	IrEng NS	German NS
Telephone	1.56 [7]	1 [7/8]	2.72 [6]	2.67 [5]
Application form	1.67 [6]	1 [7/8]	1.84 [8]	1.68 [8]
Grammar	3.15 [3]	2.76 [4]	2.05 [7]	1.96 [7]
Kitchen	4.65 [1]	3.72 (2.23) [1]	3.5 [3]	3.75 (2.25) [2]
Notes	4.5 [2]	3.3 (2) [2]	3.15 [4]	3 (1.8) [4]
Drive	2.1 [5]	2.75 (1.65) [5]	2.85 [5]	2.54 (1.52) [6]
Police	1.06 [8]	2.12 (1.27) [6]	3.53 [2]	4.58 (2.75) [1]
Presentation	2.94 [4]	2.95 (1.77) [3]	4 [1]	3.2 (1.92) [3]

Tables A7–7/A7–8. Assessment of factors relating to relative degree of imposition

Obligation to offer:

Answers: 1 = no obligation at all, 2 = no obligation, 3 = no real obligation, 4 = an obligation, 5 = a strong obligation

Difficulty in refusing:

Answers: 1 = no difficulty at all, 2 = no difficulty, 3 = no real difficulty, 4 = difficult, 5 = very difficult

Obligation to comply with request:

Answers: 1 = no obligation at all, 2 = no obligation, 3 = no real obligation, 4 = an obligation, 5 = a strong obligation

Right to pose request:

Answers: 1 = no right at all, 2 = no right, 3 = no real right, 4 = a right, 5 = a strong right

[] = ranking (starting with the highest values), () = CCSARP values (1–3 pt scale)⁴

Table A7–7. Offer/refusal situations — Assessment of factors relating to relative degree of imposition

Situations	Obligation to offer	Difficulty in refusing
	German NS	German NS
Accident	4 [1]	3.47 [1]
Beverage	2.73 [4]	2.43 [5/6]
Lift	2 [6]	2.61 [4]
Work experience	2.3 [5]	2.43 [5/6]
Bag	2.78 [3]	3.04 [3]
Maths	3.13 [2]	3.25 [2]

Table A7–8. Request situations — Assessment of factors relating to relative degree of imposition

	Obligation to comply with request		Right to pose request	
	German NS		German NS	
Telephone	2.34	[8]	3.62	[6]
Application form	3.34	[3]	4.68	[3]
Grammar	3.08	[4]	4.08	[5]
Kitchen	3.7 (2.22)	[2]	4.8 (2.88)	[2]
Notes	2.95 (1.77)	[5]	4.38 (2.63)	[4]
Drive	2.83 (1.7)	[6]	3.58 (2.15)	[7]
Police	5 (3)	[1]	4.95 (2.97)	[1]
Presentation	2.78 (1.67)	[7]	3.45 (2.07)	[8]

Appendix 8. Roleplay cards

Example situation = Offer,

Situation 1 = Refusal,

Situation 2 = Offer,

Situation 3 = Apology,

Situation 4 = Request

A = student

B = native speaker

EXAMPLE

GERMAN VERSION

Beispiel, Rolle A:

Du bist allein zu Hause. Dein Onkel/Deine Tante ist zufällig in der Gegend und kommt vorbei. Du bittest ihn/sie herein und BIETEST IHM/IHR EINE TASSE KAFFEE AN.

Dein Onkel/Deine Tante fängt an.

Vocab:

zufällig = by chance

Beispiel, Rolle B:

Du bist wegen einer Geschäftsreise zufällig in der Nähe des Hauses Deiner Schwester. Du schaust deswegen vorbei, aber leider ist nur Deine Nichte/Dein Neffe zu Hause. Sie/er bittet Dich herein und bietet Dir eine Tasse Kaffee an, aber Du LEHNST DAS ANGEBOT AB.

Du fängst an.

ENGLISH VERSION

Example, role A:

You are alone in the house. Your uncle/aunt happens to be in the area and calls in. You invite him/her in and OFFER HIM/HER A CUP OF TEA.

Your uncle/aunt starts.

Example, role B:

You are on a business trip and you happen to be in the area where your sister lives. You call in but unfortunately only your niece/nephew is at home. He/she invites you in and offers you a cup of tea, but you REFUSE THE OFFER.

You start.

SITUATION 1**GERMAN VERSION****Situation 1, Rolle A**

Nach einem Gastvortrag spricht einer/eine Deiner Professoren mit Dir und einer Freundin von Dir. Es ist Zeit, nach Hause zu fahren. Der/die Professor(in) erinnert sich daran, daß Ihr beide in seiner/ihrer Nähe wohnt. Er/sie erklärt sich bereit, Euch mit nach Hause zu nehmen. Du LEHNST DAS ANGEBOT für Dich und Deine Freundin AB.

Der/Die Professor(in) fängt an.

Vocab:

sich bereit erklären, etwas zu tun = to offer to do something

ein Angebot ablehnen = to refuse an offer

Gastvortrag (der) = guest lecture

Situation 1, Rolle B

Du bist Professor(in). Nach einem Gastvortrag sprichst Du mit zwei Deiner Studenten. Es ist Zeit, nach Hause zu fahren. Du erinnerst Dich daran, daß die Studenten in Deiner Nähe wohnen. Du ERKLÄRST DICH BEREIT, SIE MIT NACH HAUSE ZU NEHMEN.

Du fängst an mit:

“Also, ich glaube, es wird langsam Zeit für mich nach Hause zu fahren”

ENGLISH VERSION**Situation 1, role A**

After a guest lecture, one of your professors is talking to you and a friend of yours. It is time to go home. Your professor remembers that you both live near him/her and so he/she offers you both a lift home. You REFUSE for both of you.

Your professor starts.

Situation 1, role B

You are a professor. After a guest lecture, you are talking to two of your students. It is time to go home. You remember that the students live near you and so YOU OFFER THEM A LIFT HOME.

You start with:

“Well, I think it’s about time I was getting home now ”

SITUATION 2**GERMAN VERSION****Situation 2, Rolle A**

Das Matheexamen am Ende des Semesters findet nächste Woche statt. Ein guter Freund/eine gute Freundin von Dir erwähnt, daß er/sie sich darüber Sorgen macht, da er/sie Mathe schwierig findet. DU BIETEST IHM/IHR HILFE AN.

Dein(e) Freund(in) fängt an.

Vocab:

jdm Hilfe anbieten = to offer s.o. help

Situation 2, Rolle B

Das Matheexamen am Ende des Semesters findet nächste Woche statt. Du machst Dir darüber Sorgen, da Du Mathe schwierig findest. Du erwähnst das gegenüber einem guten Freund/einer guten Freundin von Dir. Er/Sie bietet Dir Hilfe an, aber Du LEHNST DAS ANGEBOT AB.

Du fängst an mit:

“Ach, ich habe schreckliche Angst vor diesem Matheexamen nächste Woche. Ich falle bestimmt durch, ich habe keine Ahnung davon.”

ENGLISH VERSION**Situation 2, role A**

The end of term maths exam is next week. A good friend of yours mentions that he/she is worried about it, as he finds maths difficult. YOU OFFER TO HELP HIM/HER.

Your friend starts.

Situation 2, role B

The end of term maths exam is next week. You are worried about it, as you find maths difficult. You mention this to a good friend of yours. He/she offers to help you, but you REFUSE THE OFFER.

You start with:

“Oh, I’m dreading this maths exam next week. I’m going to fail, I haven’t a clue of it.”

SITUATION 3 – Apology situation

SITUATION 4

GERMAN VERSION

Situation 4, Rolle A

Du studierst Germanistik an der Universität. Du warst vorgestern nicht im Seminar. Du möchtest Dir deshalb heute Aufzeichnungen ausleihen und FRAGST EINE(N) FREUND(IN) VON DIR.

Du fängst an.

Vocab:

Aufzeichnungen = notes

sich etwas ausleihen = to borrow

Situation 4, Rolle B

Du studierst Germanistik an der Universität. Vorgestern war eine Freundin/ein Freund von Dir nicht im Seminar. Er/Sie möchte sich jetzt Deine Aufzeichnungen ausleihen. Du gibst sie ihm/ihr aber möchtest sie vor der Sitzung nächste Woche zurückhaben.

Dein(e) Freund(in) fängt an.

ENGLISH VERSION

Situation 4, role A.

You’re studying German at university. You missed a classed the day before yesterday, so you’d like to borrow some notes. YOU ASK A FRIEND FOR HIS/HERS.

You start.

Situation 4, role B

You are studying German in university. A friend of yours missed a class the day before yesterday. He/she wants to borrow your notes. You give them, but would like them back again before next week's class.

Your friend starts.

Appendix 9. Retrospective interview probes

Table A9–1. Overview of retrospective probes

Categories	Probes employed
(1) <i>Noticed or attended features of the research situation</i>	What went through your mind while you were doing the roleplay?
(2) <i>Utterance planning</i>	How did you decide to say what you did?
(3) <i>Evaluation of alternative utterances</i>	(a) Did you consider alternatives to what you said? (b) Why did you reject them?
(4) <i>Pragmatic difficulty/pragmatic knowledge</i>	(a) Do you think a German would have said something different to what you said in this situation? (b) Had you participated in the roleplay in English with another Irish person, do you think – you would have acted differently or said anything different? – your partner would have acted differently or said anything different? (c) Did you feel in any way uncomfortable with what you were asked to do in the roleplays? (d) You have enacted this situation three times now in the past year. Is there anything you consciously did different this time?
(5) <i>Linguistic difficulty</i>	Did you have to alter what you would have wished to say in any way due to language difficulties?
(6) <i>Degree of heightened awareness of pragmatic issues</i>	General question: Did you discuss any of the roleplay or questionnaire situations with native speakers during the year? If so, when?, what?

Appendix 10. Coding categories for requests, offers, refusals of offers

Appendix 10.1. Strategies

Table A10–1. Request strategies — Coding categories^a

	Description	Example
Impositives	1. Mood derivable	Utterances in which the grammatical mood of the verb signals the illocutionary force.
	2. Explicit performative	Utterances in which the illocutionary force is explicitly named.
	3. Hedged performative	Utterances in which the illocutionary force is named, but in which it is also modified by hedging expressions.
	4. Locution derivable ^b	Utterances in which the illocutionary force is evident from the semantic meaning of the locution.
	5. Want statement	Utterances which state the speaker's desire that the act is carried out.
Conventionally indirect requests	6. Suggestory formula	Utterances which contain a suggestion to do x.
	7. Query preparatory	Utterances in which the preparatory conditions of a request (e.g., ability, willingness, possibility) are addressed as conventionalised in any specific language.
Non-conventionally indirect requests	8. Strong hint	Utterances containing partial reference to objects or elements needed for the implementation of the act.
	9. Mild hint	Utterances containing no direct reference to objects or elements needed for the implementation of the act. Instead the hearer is forced to interpret the relevance of the utterance in relation to the context.

Police, G18M: *Bitte fahren Sie Ihr Auto weg.* (Please move your car).
 Kitchen, G3F: *Ich bitte Dich, das Geschirr innerhalb der nächsten ½ Stunde abzuwaschen.* (I'm asking you to wash up the dishes within the next ½ hour).
 Grammar, G24F: *Ich wollte Sie um Ratschläge bitten, in welchem Buch ich gute Erklärungen finden kann.* (I wanted to ask your advice in which book I can find a good explanation).
 Kitchen, G18M: *Machst du bitte mal die Küche sauber?* (Will you em tidy the kitchen please?).
 Presentation, G27M: *... es wäre gut, wenn Du Dein Referat schon nächste Woche halten könntest.* (... it would be good if you could do your presentation next week).
 Kitchen G29F: *... Wie wär's, wenn Du Dich deshalb den Chaos in der Küche annehmen könntest, ...* (... How would it be so, if you could clear the chaos in the kitchen, ...).
 Kitchen, G17F: *Kannst Du nicht bitte Deine Sachen von gestern gleich wegmachen?* (Can't you please tidy away your things from yesterday now?).
 Kitchen, G15M: *Beim jetzigen Zustand der Küche kann ich schlecht kochen.* (The way the kitchen looks now, I can't very well cook).
 Notes, G6M: *Judith, Du bist doch eine Frau ... und Frauen müssen doch zusammenhalten ... und ich war doch vorgestern nicht da ... und da dachte ich ... ich könnte ...* (Judith, you're a woman ... and women have to stick together ... and I wasn't there the day before yesterday ... and I thought ... I could).

^a The following charts, i.e., Appendix 10, detail the coding schemes employed in this study for the speech acts, requests, offers and refusals of offers. The examples given are taken from the data of the present study and, as in the main text, all translations are the responsibility of this researcher.

^b It should be noted that this fourth most direct strategy, locution derivable, is sometimes given as an obligation statement, i.e., an utterance which communicates the hearer's obligation to carry out a certain act. This is the strategy which is listed, for example, in the introduction to the edited edition on the CCSARP project (cf. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989a: 18), despite the fact that the more extensive appendix of the same volume refers to locution derivables. In the present study, the fourth most direct strategies are given, as in Table A10–1, as locution derivables.

Table A10-2. Offer strategies — Coding categories

	Description	Example
Impositives	1. Mood derivable	Utterances in which the grammatical mood of the verb signals the illocutionary force.
	2. Hedged performative	Utterances in which the illocutionary force is named, but in which it is also modified by hedging expressions.
	3. Locution derivable	Utterances in which the illocutionary force is evident from the semantic meaning of the locution.
	4. Want statement	Utterances which state the speaker's desire that the act is carried out.
	5. Suggestory formula	Utterances which contain a suggestion that x is done.
Conventionally indirect offers	6. Query preparatory	Utterances which question the preparatory conditions of an offer (e.g., ability, desire) as conventionalised in any specific language.
	7. State preparatory	Utterances which explicitly state in a conventionalised manner that the preparatory conditions of an offer (e.g., ability, desire) hold.
	8. Strong hint	Utterances containing partial reference to objects or elements needed for the implementation of the act.
Non-conventionally indirect offers		

Table A10-3. Semantic refusal strategies — Coding categories

Sub-strategies/Realisations		Example
I DIRECT		
A. Performative	Performative statement.	Lift, E3F: No really you're okay, thank you very much Sir, you're very kind, but I'm afraid we will have to refuse.
B. Non-performative statement	<div><div>1. No, Not now. Forget it, No way, <i>Nein</i>.</div><div>2. Negative willingness (e.g., I don't want ..., I won't, <i>Ich will nicht</i>).</div><div>3. Negative ability (e.g., I can't, <i>Das geht nicht</i>).</div><div>4. Speaker preference (e.g., <i>Ich kann besser allein, ich würde lieber... am besten</i>).</div><div>5. Insistence.</div></div>	<div><div>1. Accident, E1F: No thanks. I'm really okay.</div><div>2. Maths, E15F: Forget it, I don't want your help or your sympathy.</div><div>3. Beverage, E4F: Thank you very much but I can't, ...</div><div>4. Maths, G22F: ... <i>ich glaub' ich krieg' das am besten allein hin</i>. (I think, I'd be better to do it myself).</div><div>5. Maths, A17F: <i>Danke, aber das muß ich selber schaffen, sonst würde ich nie lernen</i>. (Thanks, but I have to do it myself, otherwise I'd never learn it).</div></div>
II INDIRECT		
A. Statement of regret	I'm sorry, Es tut mir leid.	Beverage, G29F: <i>Tut mir leid, aber ich habe wenig Zeit, ...</i> (Sorry, but I don't have much time ...).
B. Excuse, reason, explanation	<div><div>I Orientation.</div><div>I, 1. Speaker-oriented.</div><div>I, 2. Hearer-oriented.</div><div>II Degree of specificity.</div><div>II, 1. Concrete excuse.</div><div>II, 2. Vague excuse.</div></div>	<div><div>I, 1. Accident, G15M: <i>Nein, ich muß weiter. Mir geht es wirklich gut ...</i> (No, I can't stop. I'm okay — really ...).</div><div>I, 2. Maths, E11F: No thanks, you've your own studying to do.</div><div>II, 1. Maths, G21F: ... <i>das geht nicht, da meine Freundin sehr eifersüchtig ist</i> (I can't, because my girlfriend is very jealous).</div><div>II, 2. Maths, A19F: <i>Neé, ich hab keine Zeit. Trotzdem danke</i>. (Na, I've no time ... Thanks all the same).</div></div>

Table A10-3. (continued)

C. Statement of alternative ^a	1. Suggest alternative.	1. Accident, G6M: ... <u>Wenn Sie vielleicht die Kosten für die Fahrradreparatur übernehmen, wäre mir weitaus mehr geholfen!</u> (... It'd be a much bigger help, if you'd maybe agree to pay for the cost of repairing the bicycle!)
D. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor	1. Criticize the offer/offerer. 2. Let interlocutor off the hook.	1. Maths, A25M: <u>Wie kannst du mir helfen? Ich bin besser als Dir</u> (How can you help me? I'm better than you). 2. Bag, G4F: <u>Nein ... Es geht schon</u> (No ... I'm all right).
ADJUNCTS TO REFUSALS		
A. Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement	Statements which modify refusals but do not themselves function as refusals. Examples: That would be great but .../Das wäre klasse aber ..., That would be good/Das wäre gut, .../Eigentlich ja, Not a bad idea/ <i>Keine schlechte Idee</i> .	Maths, G2F: <u>Das wäre klasse, aber ...</u> (That would be great, but ...).
B. Pause fillers	<i>Hmm, Ach, Also, Well, Oh.</i>	Maths, G15M: <i>Hmm, eigentlich ja, aber ...</i> (Hmm, yes, but).
C. Gratitude/appreciation	Thanks, Thank you, <i>Danke, Ich danke Dir/Ihnen</i> , That's kind of you/ <i>Wie nett, Das ist nett</i> .	Maths, G11F: <u>Wie nett, aber ...</u> (How nice, but ...).
D. Disarming comments	Don't misunderstand me/ <i>Nimm's mir nicht übel</i> .	Beverage, G22F: <i>Du, nimm's mir nicht übel, aber ...</i> (Don't misunderstand me, but ...).
E. Request for information/clarification	How...?/ <i>Wie ...?</i>	Maths, A25M: <u>Wie kannst du mir helfen?</u> ... (How can you help me?...).
F. Reference to possible future request	If .../In case .../ <i>Wenn ...</i> , <i>Falls ...</i>	Work experience, G6M: ... <i>Falls er dann immer noch nicht besser werden sollte, komme ich gerne nochmal auf Ihr Angebot zurück</i> (If he still doesn't improve, I'd be happy to come back to your offer).

^a As Chen et al. (1995: 139), however, note, in contrast to refusals of requests, for example, alternatives are not found frequently in refusals of offers. This, they explain with reference to the fact that offers are costly to the speaker and beneficial to the hearer. Offering or suggesting that a further offer ensues would, thus, be an imposition on the hearer — unlike the case in requests where it would be beneficial for the hearer. Indeed, the situation in which this strategy is found most often here is the accident situation where the hearer is indebted to the speaker due to the accident caused.

Appendix 10.2. Modification

Appendix 10.2.1. Lexical and phrasal downgraders (L&PDs)

Table A10–4. Lexical and phrasal downgraders, requests — Coding categories

	Description	Realisations	Example
1. Politeness marker	Represents an effort to seek co-operation.	– <i>bitte</i> /please	Application form, G4F: <i>Könnten Sie mir <u>bitte</u> ein Bewerbungsformular zuschicken?</i> (Could you please send me an application form, please?)
2. Understater	Adverbial modifiers that under-represent the situation presented in the proposition.	– <i>ein bißchen/etwas</i> /a bit/a little	Grammar, A27F: <i>Können Sie mir ein <u>bißchen</u> Hilfe geben?</i> (Can you give me a little help?)
3. Hedge	Adverbials employed in order to avoid giving precise details.	– <i>irgendwie</i> /somehow/kind of/sort of	Presentation, G13F: <i>Ich ... stelle fest, ... Können Sie <u>das irgendwie einrichten?</u></i> (I ... see that ... Is there <u>any way</u> you can manage that?)
4. Subjectiviser	Elements which express a speaker's subjective opinion with regard to the situation referred to in the proposition.	– <i>ich fürchte</i> /I'm afraid – I wonder – <i>ich denke</i> /I think – <i>ich glaube</i> /I believe – <i>ich nehme an</i> /I suppose – In my opinion	Presentation, E7F: I was wondering if you could ...
5. Downtoner	Sentential or propositional modifiers employed to moderate the force of a request on the addressee.	– perhaps/possibly/maybe – just – <i>doch</i> – <i>eben/halt</i> – <i>einfach</i> – <i>mal</i> – <i>ruhig</i> – <i>schon</i> – <i>vielleicht</i>	Notes, G4F: ... <i>Könntest Du mir Deine <u>Aufzeichnungen mal leihen?</u></i> (... Could you <u>er</u> could you lend me your notes?) Grammar, G2F: <i>Können Sie mir <u>vielleicht</u> helfen?</i> (Can you help me maybe?)

Table A10-4. (continued)

	Description	Realisations	Example
6. Cajoler	"Conventionalized speech items whose semantic content is of little transparent relevance to their discourse meaning" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b:284), their discourse function being the establishment, restoration or extension of harmony between the hearer and speaker.	- weißt Du/wissen Sie/you know - verstehen Sie/you understand - siehst Du/sehen Sie/you see - actually/eigentlich	Presentation, A1F: Ich habe bemerkt, daß dein Referat über die Staatstheorie des Aristoteles eigentlich viel besser für die Sitzung nächste Woche passen würde. (I noticed that your presentation on Aristoteles' State theory would actually be much better for the class next week). Drive, C6M: ... Könnte ich vielleicht mit Ihnen fahren, oder? (... Could I maybe go with you, yes?) ^a
7. Appeal	Elements whose function it is to evoke a hearer signal of understanding.	- Tags: nicht?/oder?/ja?/okay?/will you?/aren't we?	Presentation, G1F: ... Die Staatstheorie des Aristoteles ist ja für in zwei Wochen geplant. Es würde aber nächste Woche viel besser rein passen. Meinst du, es wäre möglich?
8. Consultative Device	Elements chosen to involve the hearer directly in an effort to gain compliance.	- Glaubst du?/Meinst du?/Do you think?	(... Aristoteles' State Theory is planned for two weeks time. It would be much better next week though. Do you think, that would be possible?) Kitchen, G16F: Könntest Du bitte die Küche mal eben putzen? (Could you er could you please clean the kitchen?) (politeness marker, 2 downtoners).
9. Combinations			

^a Syntactically, this utterance is actually inappropriate. However, it is clear that the learner here is attempting to downgrade his utterance using an appeal.

Table A10–5. Lexical and phrasal downgraders, offers — Coding categories

	Description	Realisations	Example
1. Politeness marker	Represents an effort to seek co-operation.	– <i>bitte</i> /please	Accident, G7F: <u>Aber bitte</u> , laß' mich <u>Dich ins Krankenhaus fahren</u> . (But please, let me bring you to hospital).
2. Understater	Adverbial modifiers that under-represent the situation presented in the proposition.	– <i>ein bißchen</i> , <i>etwas</i> /a little, – <i>ein Stück</i> /a bit	Work experience, E23F: I study economics at school so if you'd like, I wouldn't mind tutoring him a little.
3. Hedge	Adverbials employed in order to avoid giving precise details.	– <i>irgendwie</i> /somehow/in some way/in any way – <i>irgendwas</i> /anything – <i>wahrscheinlich</i> /probably	Bag, G20M: <u>Hi, kann ich Dir <u>irgendwie</u> helfen?</u> (Hi, can I help you in any way?) Beverage, G27M: <u>Kann ich Dir <u>irgendwas</u> anbieten?</u> (Can I offer you anything?)
4. Subjectiviser	Elements which express a speaker's subjective opinion with regard to the situation referred to in the proposition.	– <i>ich glaube</i> /I think – I wonder	Accident, G26F: ... <u>Ich glaube ich fahre Sie doch ins Krankenhaus</u> . (... em ... I think, I'll drive you to hospital).
5. Downtoner	Sentential or propositional modifiers employed to moderate the impact the offer has on the addressee.	– just – maybe/perhaps – <i>doch</i> – <i>eben</i> – <i>ja</i> – <i>mal</i> – <i>noch</i> – <i>ruhig</i> – <i>vielleicht</i> – <i>meinst Du</i> ... – <i>Was hältst Du davon, wenn ...</i>	Bag, G29F: ... <u>kann ich Dir <u>vielleicht</u> beim Tragen helfen?</u> (... can I help you to carry those maybe?) Accident, G16F: ... <u>Ich könnte Sie <u>eben</u> ins Krankenhaus mitnehmen</u> . (... I could give you a quick lift to the hospital)
6. Consultative Device	Elements chosen to involve the hearer directly in an effort to gain compliance.		Work experience, G6M: <u>Was halten Sie denn davon, wenn ich Ihrem Sohn <u>Nachhilfe</u> geben würde?</u> (What would you think, if I were to give your son extra tuition?) Maths, G31M: <u>Meinst du, es hilft, wenn wir uns <u>mal</u> deswegen <u>zusammensetzen</u>?</u> (Do you think it would help if we were to get together some time to go through it?)
7. Combinations			Work experience, G16F: ... <u>vielleicht könnte ich ihm da <u>ja ein bißchen</u> <u>Nachhilfe</u> geben</u> . (... em, maybe I could give him <u>some</u> private tuition) (downtoner, understater).

Table A10–6. Lexical and phrasal downgraders, refusals — Coding categories

	Description	Realisations	Example
1. Politeness marker	Represents an effort to seek co-operation	— please/ <i>bitte</i>	Accident, A9F: <u>Bitte nicht</u> ... (<u>Please don't</u> ...)
2. Understater	Adverbial modifiers that under-represent the situation presented in the proposition	— a bit/a little/ <i>ein bißchen/etwas</i> — a moment/ <i>einen Moment/einen Augenblick</i>	Lift, G23F: ... <u>Karin und ich wollten sowieso noch ein bißchen quatschen</u> ... (... Karin and I wanted to chat for a bit more anyhow ...)
3. Hedge	Adverbials employed in order to avoid giving precise details	— somehow/kind of/sort of/ <i>irgendwie</i> — something/ <i>etwas</i> — something else/ <i>etwas anderes</i>	Maths, G4F: ... <u>Ich schaff das schon irgendwann</u> ... (... I'll manage it all right somehow).
4. Subjectiviser	Elements which express a speaker's subjective opinion with regard to the situation referred to in the proposition	— I wonder <i>ich fürchte</i> /I'm afraid — <i>ich denke</i> /I think — <i>ich glaube</i> /I believe — <i>ich nehme an</i> /I suppose — in my opinion	Accident, G33M: <u>Nein, vielen Dank. Ich denke, dies ist nicht nötig</u> ... (No, thanks very much. I don't think that's necessary ...)
5. Downtoner	Sentential or propositional modifiers employed to moderate the force of a refusal on the addressee	— perhaps/possibly/maybe — just — simply — <i>doch</i> — <i>eh</i> — <i>einfach</i> — <i>halt</i> — <i>mal</i> — <i>schon</i> — <i>vielleicht</i> — <i>wohl</i>	Maths, G32M: <u>Nee, danke, Du. Du hast doch selber genug zu tun.</u> (No thanks. You've enough to do yourself) Work, G8F: ... <u>er sollte sich einfach mal hinsetzen und lernen</u> ... (... he just has to sit down and study ...) Maths, G27M: <u>Nee, laß mal</u> ... (No, leave it ...) Maths, G34F: <u>Mensch, Sigrid, das ist echt nett von Dir, aber ... Ich bin halt ein hoffnungsloser Fall</u> ... (Hey Sigrid, that's really nice of you but ... I'm just a hopeless case) Bag, G2F: <u>Nein, nein — es geht schon</u> ... (No, no — er, I'm all right ...) Accident, G27M: <u>Das ist nicht nötig, es ist wohl nichts Schlimmes passiert</u> (That's not necessary. Sure, it's nothing).

Table A10–6. (continued)

	Description	Realisations	Example
6. Cajoler	“Conventionalized speech items whose semantic content is of little transparent relevance to their discourse meaning” (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b:284), their discourse function being the establishment, restoration or extension of harmony between the hearer and speaker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – <i>weißt Du/wissen Sie/you know</i> – <i>verstehen Sie/you understand</i> – <i>siehst Du/sehen Sie/you see</i> – actually/<i>eigentlich</i> 	Beverage, G30M: <i>Nein, <u>eigentlich</u> habe ich keine Zeit ...</i> (No, I’ve no time <u>actually ...</u>)
7. Appealer	Elements whose function it is to evoke a hearer signal of understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tags: <i>okay?/will you?/aren’t we?/nicht?/oder?/ja?</i> 	Lift, A20F: <i>Nein ... Danke, <u>ja?</u></i> (No ... Thanks, <u>okay?</u>)
8. Combinations			Maths, G14M: <i>Ist schon o.k. Ich <u>schaff das schon irgendwie</u></i> (It’s okay. I’ll manage that all right somehow) (2 downtoners, 1 hedge).

Appendix 10.2.2. Syntactic downgraders (SDn)

Table A10–7. Syntactic downgraders, requests — Coding categories

	Description	Example
1. Interrogative	Coded where optional. ^a	Kitchen, G14M: <u>Räumst Du bitte vorher noch die Küche auf?</u> (Will you tidy the kitchen please before they come?)
2. Negation of preparatory conditions	The preparatory conditions for requests are: (a) The hearer is able to perform the act, x. The speaker believes the hearer is able to do x. (b) It is not obvious that the hearer would do x without being asked. Only optional subjunctive forms are coded. ^c	Application, G18M: (negation of preparatory condition (a)): ... <u>wollte fragen, ob Sie mir nicht ein Bewerbungsformular zuschicken können.</u> (... wanted to ask, whether you can't send me out an application form). ^b
3. Subjunctive		Application, G27M: <u>Ich wollte fragen, ob es möglich sei, daß ich ein Bewerbungsformular bekomme.</u> (I wanted to ask, if it was possible for me to get an application form).
4. Conditional	Use of the conditional serves to distance the speaker from the reality of the situation and, thus, to decrease the face-threat to the speaker of a request being refused. It is coded only when optional and, thus, downgrading. ^d	Application, G21F: <u>Würden Sie mir bitte ein Bewerbungsformular schicken?</u> (Would you please send me an application form?)
5. Aspect	Inclusion of types of aspect, such as the durative aspect marker. Usage is only regarded as mitigating, if it can be substituted by a simpler form. ^e	Notes, E14F: Ciara, I was <u>wondering</u> could I borrow your notes from yesterday's class ...
6. Tense	Past tense forms are coded as downgrading only if they can be substituted with present tense forms without a change in semantic meaning. ^f	Notes E14F: Ciara, I <u>was wondering</u> could I borrow your notes from yesterday's class ...
7. Conditional clause	The speaker, with the aid of a conditional clause, is able to distance the request in question from reality, and so decrease the face-threat should the request be refused (cf. Trosborg 1995: 211).	Kitchen, G29F: ... <u>Wie wär's, wenn Du Dich deshalb den Chaos in der Küche annehmen könntest, ich wäre ...</u> (... How would it be so, if you could clear the chaos in the kitchen then, I would ...).
8. Conditional combination — conditional clause, conditional	Cf. points 4 and 7.	Police, E18F: Sorry, lady, if you don't mind <u>would</u> you please park your car further down the street.
9. Tense, conditional, conditional clause(s)	Cf. points 4, 6 and 7.	Notes, A10F: <u>Judith, ... Ich wollte (tense) dir nur fragen ob (conditional clause) ich vielleicht deine Aufzeichnungen ausleihen könnte (conditional)! (Judith, ... I just wanted (tense) to ask you if (conditional clause) I could (conditional) perhaps borrow your notes!</u>

Table A10-7. (continued)

Description	Example
10. Aspect, tense, conditional, conditional clause	Application, E16F: I <u>was</u> (tense) just <u>wondering</u> (aspect), <u>if</u> (conditional clause) I could (conditional) have an application form.
11. Negation of preparatory conditions, interrogative	Kichen, G20M: <i>Meinst du nicht, daß es mal Zeit wird, die Küche aufzuräumen?</i> ... (Do you not think that it's about time to clean up the kitchen? ...)
12. Other combinations	Telephone, E14F: Excuse me but I <u>was</u> (tense) <u>wondering</u> (aspect) do you have a twenty for these two tens, please.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Examples include: - interrogative and conditional, - aspect, tense and conditional, - tense and conditional, - tense and aspect, - aspect, tense and conditional clause, - negation and conditional, - conditional clauses and conditional. 	

^a Although the use of the interrogative with a query/preparatory head act strategy is sometimes coded in studies, such as that by Faerch/Kasper (1989), the CCSARP coding manual explicitly states:

"With Preparatory Request strategies of the *can I/you do P* type the interrogative is unmarked, which suggests it should not be coded as a syntactic downgrader" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b:281, original emphasis). In other words, the locution derivable given in the present example could also take the form "*Du räumst bitte vorher noch die Küche auf*". Consequently, the interrogative is downgrading. As in the coding manual, the interrogative was only coded in the present data where it appeared with a locution derivable strategy.

^b It should be noted that "...propositional negation of the type *You not do P* (e.g., you can't park here/Don't leave the kitchen in such a state again) by definition has no modalizing function and is therefore not coded" (cf. Blum-Kulka et al. 1989b: 282, original emphasis). In other words, "*nicht*" in the present example could be omitted without changing the propositional content — its function is downgrading only — and, thus, coded.

^c In the example here, it is possible to use the indicative form, "*Ich wollte fragen, ob es möglich ist...*" (I wanted to ask if it is possible ...), and so the subjunctive form is optional, and must be coded.

^d Here *würden* (would), the conditional could be omitted and the utterance phrased as follows: "*Schicken Sie mir bitte ein Bewerbungsformular*" (Please send me an application form).

^e The durative aspect marker could be omitted, for example, from the utterance given here — as in "*I wondered could I...*"

^f Here "I was" can be realised with the present tense form "I'm (just) wondering could I..."

Table A10–8. Syntactic downgraders, offers — Coding categories

	Description	Example
1. Interrogative	Only coded where optional. ^a	Lift, G14M: <i>Soll ich Euch mitnehmen...?</i> (Shall I give you a lift?)
2. Negation of preparatory conditions	The preparatory conditions for offers are: (a) The speaker is able to perform the act, x, (b) The hearer wants the speaker to perform x.	Negation of preparatory condition (a): Beverage, G9F: <i>Aber kann ich Dir nicht einen Kaffee anbieten?</i> (But can I not offer you a coffee?) Negation of preparatory condition (b): Beverage, G12F: <i>Willst du nicht auf eine Tasse Kaffee 'reinkommen?</i> (Do you <u>not</u> want to come in for a cup of coffee?) Work experience, G4F: <i>Wenn Sie wollen, <u>könnte</u> ich Ihrem Sohn Nachhilfe geben...</i> (If you want, I could give your son extra tuition ...).
3. Conditional	Serves to distance the speaker from the reality of the situation and thus decrease the face-threat to the speaker of an offer being refused. The conditional is only coded when optional and, therefore, downgrading. ^b	Bag, E11F: I noticed you have two big bags, I was wondering do you need a hand?
4. Aspect	Inclusion of types of aspect, such as the durative aspect marker. Usage is only regarded as mitigating, if it can be substituted by a simpler form. ^c	Work experience, G15M: <i>Ich habe Ihr Gespräch <u>eben</u> mitbekommen und wollte Ihnen anbieten, ob ich <u>vielleicht</u> Ihrem Sohn Nachhilfe geben soll?</i> (I <u>just</u> heard your conversation and <u>wanted</u> to offer to maybe give your son extra tuition?)
5. Tense	Past tense forms are coded as downgrading only if they can be substituted with present tense forms without a change in semantic meaning. ^d	Accident, E9F: I can drive you to the hospital, if you like.
6. Conditional clause	The speaker, with the aid of a conditional clause, is able to distance the offer in question from reality and so decrease the face-threat, should the offer be refused (cf. Trosborg 1995:211 in relation to requests). ^e	Work experience, G2F: <i>Ehm... <u>Entschuldigen</u> Sie, ... <u>Wenn</u> (conditional clause) <u>Ihr Sohn solche Schwierigkeiten hat, <u>könnte</u> (conditional) ich ihm vielleicht helfen ...</u></i>
7. Conditional combination — conditional clause, conditional	Cf. points 3 and 6.	(Sorry, ... <u>If</u> (conditional clause) your son has such difficulties, I <u>could</u> (conditional) maybe help him ...)

Table A10–8. (continued)

	Description	Example
8. Tense, conditional, conditional clause	Cf. points 3, 5 and 6.	Work experience, A12F: ... <u>Ich wollte</u> (tense) <u>nur sagen</u> , <u>daß wenn</u> (conditional clause) <u>Sie möchten</u> (conditional), <u>könnte</u> (conditional) <u>ich ihm helfen</u> . <u>Ich studiere Wirtschaft an der Uni</u> . (I just wanted (tense) to say, that if (conditional clause) you'd like (conditional), I could (conditional) help him. I study Economics in University).
9. Negation of preparatory conditions, interrogative	Cf. points 1 and 2.	Accident, G9F: <u>Soll ich Sie nicht</u> (negation) <u>besser ins Krankenhaus fahren?</u> (interrogative) (Had I not (negation) better drive you to hospital? (interrogative))

^a As was the case with requests, the use of the interrogative with a query preparatory head act strategy was not coded in this study (cf. Table A10–7).

^b In the example given here, "könnte" (could) could be replaced by "Wenn Sie wollen, kann ich ..." (If you want, I can ...).

^c The utterance given here can also be phrased as "... I wondered do you need a hand?"

^d In the example given here, "wollte" (wanted) can be substituted here with "will Ihnen anbieten ..." (and want to offer, ...).

^e It should be noted here that although, as Wunderlich (1977:43) argues, the conditional formula "If you want it, I shall do a" is the standard form which underlines all offers (cf. 4.3.2), explicit reference to the role of the hearer in the possible execution of the future act serves to downgrade an offer.

Appendix 11. Pre-/Post-year abroad metapragmatic data

Table A11–1. Labels used by Irish learners to describe the German people prior to the year abroad

Characteristic	n = 99 labels
diligent/industrious/hard-working/busy/efficient/disciplined	18
no/very little/unusual sense of humour/serious	11
confident/assertive/positively opinionated	10
reserved/standoffish/hard to get to know	10
direct/matter of fact/blunt/abrupt/rude	7
open/liberal	6
honest/trustworthy/proper/orderly	5
punctual	4
authoritative/patronising/bossy	4
logical/organised/practical	3
knowledgeable/intelligent	3
precise/exact	2
trusting	2
conservative	2
friendly/nice	2
vigilant	1
patriotic	1
polite	1
extreme	1
unusual personality traits	1
helpful	1
proud	1
intolerant	1

Table A11–2. Labels used by Irish learners to describe the German people at the end of the year abroad

Characteristic	n = 131 labels
direct/to the point/rude/abrupt/blunt/ignorant	26
studious/diligent/industrious/hard-working/efficient/business-like	16
friendly/nice/easy to get along with/hospitable	12
confident/self-assured	8
logical/organised/practical/level-headed/controlled	7
helpful/considerate	6
punctual/obsessed with time	6
honest/law-abiding	6
reserved/hard to get to know	6
sometimes lack humour/boring/serious/boring	6
authoritative/arrogant/superior/condescending	5
open/liberal	5
funny when know them/relatively good fun/sense of humour	3
ambitious	3
regulated/live by routine	2
a bit wacko/freaks	2
inhibited/uptight	2
calculated/cold	2
conservative	1
at times inflexible	1
controlled	1
decisive	1
mature	1
environmentally-friendly	1
stressful	1
bureaucratic	1
polite	1

Table A11–3. A comparison of the ranking of the most frequent labels used by Irish learners to describe the German people at the beginning and end of the year abroad

Characteristic	Pre-year rank- ing	Post-year rank- ing
direct/to the point/rude/abrupt/blunt/ignorant	4	1
studious/diligent/industrious/hard-working/ efficient/business-like	1	2
friendly/nice/easy to get along with/hospitable	9J	3
confident/self-assured	3J	4
logical/organised/practical/level-headed/controlled	8J	5
helpful/considerate	10J	6J
punctual/obsessed with time	7J	6J
honest/law-abiding	6	6J
reserved/hard to get to know	3J	6J
sometimes lack humour/boring/serious/boring	2	6J
authoritative/arrogant/superior/condescending	7J	7J
open/liberal	5	7J

J = joint ranking

Appendix 12. Sample retrospective interview/self report

Notes situation

Transcription conventions

A17F:	learner informant
R:	researcher
NS:	native speaker
...	medium length pause
()	longer pause
(cough)	non-verbal comment
[]	overlap between speakers
?	question signified by intonation or other means

Stimulus — Roleplay:

- A17F: Okay ah... entschuldigung warst Du gestern in dieser eh Vorlesung von Germanistik? () ich war gestern abend... gestern nicht da ich war ziemlich krank
() und... kannst Du mir vielleicht die... Aufzeichnung ausleihen?
- NS: J Ja [also]
- A17F: [Ja?]
- NS: ich kann sie Dir schon geben aber ich muß sie wieder zurück [haben]
- A17F: [(cough)]
- A17F: Ja ist [kein Problem]
- NS: [weißt Du] weil die Prüfung und ()
- A17F: Mm
- NS: kannst Du sie Dir kopieren
- A17F: Ja [kein Problem]
- NS: [also] aber bis nächster Woche brauche ich sie auf jeden Fall
- A17F: Mmh mh dann gebe ich zurück
- NS: Okay
- A17F: Kein Problem

Retrospective interview/self-report:

- R: Okay so you're a you're asking for notes... What went through your mind?
- A17F: em () I didn't like the... having to start it off
- R: Right ... [okay]
- A17F: [bit]
- R: Why? Did you find it harder or?
- A17F: Yeah... it's harder because
- R: yeah
- A17F: I'm the one who has to start the whole thing and I'm
- R: Right

- A17F: I'm not waiting for a reaction to see ()
R: To see what you're going to say?
A17F: Yeah (unclear)
R: So how did you decide what to say?
A17F: em (laugh) I don't know I just tried to imagine that that I was actually doing it and
R: Mm
A17F: you know...
R: yeah
A17F: you just have to
R: yeah
A17F: you know ... go up and ask
R: Yeah ... yeah and () did language get in the way?
A17F: em () no ... but I think if ... well maybe ... if I was speaking in English ... I would have [said]
R: [yeah]
A17F: maybe... it sounded very blunt the way I said it
R: Right... okay
A17F: very kind of cut and dry... I wasn't there kind of [can]
R: [okay]
A17F: I have your notes?
R: right okay ... so you think a German would have been kind of? () yeah
A17F: It just didn't I wouldn't say it that way in English
R: Right yeah and what about a German... would they say it... the way you said it ... or?
A17F: em... I think so
R: you think so?
A17F: yeah
R: so you () would you be more direct?
A17F: [mm I think I was more]
R: [(unclear) in German?]
A17F: Yeah... I think so () coz it's [just]
R: [yeah]
A17F: you have to in German to get the message across
R: [Right okay... so...]
A17F: [you know straight away]
R: right if you were requesting in general... you would be straight to the point?
A17F: Mmh
R: Right okay... and would your partner have acted differently in English () if that was another Irish person?
A17F: Em ... no
R: No the same?
A17F: Yeah
R: And... do you think it's close to real life in Germany... the situation?
A17F: Yeah

- R: Mm?
- A17F: Yeah
- R: Yeah? Have you ever asked for notes?
- A17F: No [(laughs)]
- R: [No? (laughs)] Would you?
- A17F: em ... [if] I knew them well
- R: [(unclear)]
- A17F: yeah... if I knew them [well]
- R: [no... right]
- A17F: but other than that no
- R: No ... okay... And did you do anything consciously different this time ... compared to the last times?
- A17F: No
- R: Okay

Appendix 13. Additional tables/graphs of findings

Table A13–1. Students’ self-reports of linguistic competence prior to the year abroad^a

Near-native	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor
0	3.1	43.8	50	3.1	0

^a All values are expressed in percentages

Table A13–2. Frequency of offer-refusal exchanges of the form Initiate–*n*(Contra)–Satisfy, *n* > 1 — Developmental focus^a

	Accident	Beverage	Work exp.	Lift	Bag	Maths	Average
L(1)	83.3	50	18.7	30.3	66.7	41.9	48.5
L(2)	53.3	17.2	20.7	9.4	31.2	37.5	28.2
L(3)	54.8	7.1	18.2	13.3	30.3	12.1	22.6
German NS	35.5	8.8	3	5.9	14.7	17.6	14.2
IrEng NS	61.5	70.4	15.4	59.3	77.8	55.6	56.7

^a All values are expressed in percentages

Table A13–3. Frequency of “*Es geht*” in off-the-hook strategies over initial and first subsequent refusals — Developmental focus^a

	Accident	Bag
L(1)	3.6	22.2
L(2)	7.8	15.4
L(3)	11.1	44.4
German NS	16.4	48.3

^a All values are expressed in percentages

Table A13–4. Frequency of “*Kein Problem*”/“No problem” as a Minimize by offer/refusal situation

		Accident	Beverage	Work exp.	Lift	Bag	Maths
L(1)	% Minimizes	76.7	69	12.6	93.9	84.8	74.2
	% “No problem”	–	5	50	3.2	7.1	–
IrEng NS	% Minimizes	73.1	77.8	84.6	77.8	81.5	85.2
	% “No problem”	–	4.8	22.7	9.5	4.5	8.7

Table A13–5. Frequency of “*Das ist nett/lieb/liebenswürdig/freundlich*”/“That’s kind/nice/good of you” in gratitude strategies over initial and first subsequent refusals — Developmental focus

		Accident	Beverage	Work exp.	Lift	Bag	Maths
L(1)	% gratitude	44.6	53.3	70	81.6	70.4	56.8
	% kind/ “ <i>nett</i> ”	3.8	–	25	11.1	18.2	8
L(2)	% gratitude	57.4	83.3	90.9	88.6	83.3	72.1
	% kind/ “ <i>nett</i> ”	3.7	13	23.7	23.1	12.5	14.8
L(3)	% gratitude	49	71.9	82	83.8	83.3	64.9
	% kind/ “ <i>nett</i> ”	7.7	–	41.5	36.7	15	23.1
German NS	% gratitude	57.1	54	82.3	91.7	77.5	37.5
	% kind/ “ <i>nett</i> ”	8	27.3	54.5	36.4	17.6	18.7
IrEng NS	% gratitude	38.1	45.6	71	79.1	70.2	37.2
	% kind/ “ <i>nett</i> ”	–	–	28	2.9	2.7	–

Table A13–6. Frequency of syntactic downgraders with conventionally indirect offer strategies

		Accident	Beverage	Work exp.	Lift	Bag	Maths
L(1)	% CI	40	71.4	70.6	87.9	93.9	90.6
	% SDn	50	80	75	51.7	22.6	65.5
German NS	% CI	19.4	47.1	72.7	55.9	55.9	41.2
	% SDn	50	62.5	79.2	47.4	21.1	71.4
IrEng NS	% CI	57.7	51.9	88.5	70.4	70.4	74.1
	% SDn	53.3	85.7	95.7	68.4	65.2	90

CI = Conventionally indirect strategies; SDn = Syntactic Downgraders

Table A13–7. Frequency of syntactic downgraders with conventionally indirect offer strategies — Developmental focus

		Beverage	Work exp.	Lift	Bag	Maths
L(1)	% CI	71.4	70.6	87.9	93.9	90.6
	% SDn	80	75	51.7	22.6	65.5
L(2)	% CI	79.3	80	100	81.3	78.1
	% SDn	82.6	62.5	53.1	26.9	60
L(3)	% CI	68.7	90.9	78.8	63.6	87.9
	% SDn	65.2	80	65.4	14.3	58.6
German NS	% CI	47.1	72.7	55.9	55.9	41.2
	% SDn	62.5	79.2	47.4	21.1	71.4
IrEng NS	% CI	51.9	88.5	70.4	70.4	74.1
	% SDn	85.7	95.7	68.4	65.2	90

CI = Conventionally indirect strategies; SDn = Syntactic Downgraders

Table A13–8. Frequency of syntactic downgraders with conventionally indirect request strategies — Developmental focus

	Notes	Drive	Telephone	Grammar	Presentation	Application	Kitchen	Police
L(1)	% CI	97	52.9	82.4	88.9	93.8	50	51.7
	% SDn	67.7	44.4	57.1	81.2	40	6.2	7.1
L(2)	% CI	90.6	37.5	76.7	79.2	84.4	68.8	58.1
	% SDn	79.3	50	47.8	89.5	59.3	9.1	5.6
L(3)	% CI	87.9	39.4	78.8	72.4	84.4	63.6	57.6
	% SDn	75.9	38.5	23.1	71.4	44.4	19	5.3
German NS	% CI	90	63.3	75.9	93.3	90	63.3	53.3
	% SDn	81.5	73.7	59.1	82.1	88.9	68.4	50
IrEng NS	% CI	96.3	50	90.9	85	91.3	63	69.2
	% SDn	100	100	95	94.1	95.2	70.6	100

CI = Conventionally indirect strategies; SDn = Syntactic downgraders

Table A13–9. Frequency of lexical and phrasal downgraders over initial and first subsequent refusals — Developmental focus^a

	Accident	Beverage	Work Exp.	Lift	Bag	Maths	Average
L(1)	12.5	37.8	21	25.6	16.1	15.6	21.4
L(2)	14.9	35.1	27.3	33.3	19	35.7	27.5
L(3)	16.4	59.4	42.1	22.2	27.3	39.5	34.5
German NS	47.6	69.4	55.9	36.1	64.1	72.5	57.6
IrEng NS	24.4	45.6	35.5	30.2	28	13.3	29.5

^a All values are expressed in percentages

Table A13–10. Frequency of lexical and phrasal downgrader types over initial and first subsequent refusals — Developmental focus

		Accident	Beverage	Work	Lift	Bag	Maths
L(1)	% L&PD	12.5	37.8	21	25.6	16.1	15.6
	% Downtoner	60	44	25	33.3	77.8	33.3
	% Subjectivizer	–	36	50	8.3	–	22.2
	% Understater	40	8	–	25	11.1	33.3
	% Hedge	–	12	25	33.3	11.1	11.1
	% Cajoler	–	–	–	–	–	–
	% Others	–	–	–	–	–	–
L(2)	% L&PD	14.9	35.1	27.3	33.3	19	35.7
	% Downtoner	50	54.5	20	–	50	22.2
	% Subjectivizer	37.5	18.2	30	60	12.5	38.9
	% Understater	–	18.2	10	26.7	25	27.8
	% Hedge	–	4.5	10	13.3	12.5	5.5
	% Cajoler	–	4.5	30	–	–	5.5
	% Others	12.5	–	–	–	–	–
L(3)	% L&PD	16.4	59.4	42.1	22.2	27.3	39.5
	% Downtoner	57	54.2	30	12.5	69.2	21
	% Subjectivizer	7.1	29.2	45	25	–	52.6
	% Understater	14.3	8.3	10	25	7.7	10.5
	% Hedge	7.1	8.3	15	25	15.4	5.3
	% Cajoler	14.3	–	–	12.5	7.7	10.5
	% Others	–	–	–	–	–	–

Table A13–10. (continued)

		Accident	Beverage	Work	Lift	Bag	Maths
German NS	% L&PD	47.6	69.4	55.9	36.1	64.1	72.5
	% Downtoner	62.9	71.7	48.5	44.4	96.1	68.9
	% Subjectivizer	22.2	7.5	39.4	11.1	3.8	15.5
	% Understater	14.8	3.8	3	11.1	–	2.2
	% Hedge	–	11.3	6.1	33.3	–	11.1
	% Cajoler	–	5.7	3	–	–	2.2
	% Others	–	–	–	–	–	–
IrEng NS	% L&PD	24.4	45.6	35.5	30.2	28	13.3
	% Downtoner	61.5	48.3	26.7	6.7	62.5	50
	% Subjectivizer	30.8	6.9	26.7	13.3	12.5	33.3
	% Understater	–	17.2	26.7	46.7	18.7	–
	% Hedge	–	20.7	6.7	26.7	6.2	–
	% Cajoler	7.7	6.9	13.3	6.7	–	–
	% Others	–	–	–	–	–	16.7

L&PD = Lexical and phrasal downgraders

Table A13–11. Frequency of lexical and phrasal downgrader types with conventionally indirect request strategies in non-standard situations — Developmental focus

		Notes	Drive	Telephone	Grammar
L(1)	% CI	100	97	52.9	82.4
	% L&PD	60.6	34.4	88.9	64.3
	% “ <i>bitte</i> ” (please)	47.6	30.8	63.6	36.4
	% Downtoner	38.1	53.8	18.2	36.4
	% Understater	4.8	–	18.2	18.2
	% Subjectivizer	9.5	7.7	–	–
	% Others (e.g., hedge, consultative device, appealer)	–	7.7	–	–
L(2)	% CI	93.8	90.6	37.5	76.7
	% L&PD	56.7	41.4	66.7	82.6
	% “ <i>bitte</i> ” (please)	55.6	33.3	27.3	40.9
	% Downtoner	38.9	50	18.2	40.9
	% Understater	–	–	54.5	9.1
	% Subjectivizer	5.6	16.7	–	–
	% Others (e.g., hedge, consultative device, appealer)	–	–	–	9.1

Table A13–11. (continued)

		Notes	Drive	Telephone	Grammar
L(3)	% CI	87.9	87.9	39.4	78.8
	% L&PD	55.2	37.9	84.6	65.4
	% “ <i>bitte</i> ” (please)	29.4	18.2	15.4	26.3
	% Downtoner	70.6	81.8	38.5	36.8
	% Subjectivizer	—	—	—	—
	% Understater	—	—	46.1	21
	% Others (e.g., hedge, consultative device, appealer)	—	—	—	15.8
German NS	% CI	93.3	90	63.3	75.9
	% L&PD	53.6	63	84.2	68.2
	% “ <i>bitte</i> ” (please)	27.8	—	5.3	5.9
	% Downtoner	72.2	88.9	73.7	58.8
	% Subjectivizer	—	—	—	—
	% Understater	—	11.1	21	29.4
	% Others (e.g., hedge, consultative device, appealer)	—	—	—	5.9
IrEng NS	% CI	88.9	96.3	50	90.9
	% L&PD	66.7	73.1	50	70
	% “please”	11.1	—	—	25
	% Downtoner	11.1	24	11.1	15
	% Subjectivizer	44.4	76	33.3	55
	% Understater	—	—	—	—
	% Hedge	—	—	44.4	5
	% Consultative device	33.3	—	11.1	—
	% Appealer	—	—	—	—

L&PD = Lexical and phrasal downgraders; CI = Conventionally indirect strategy

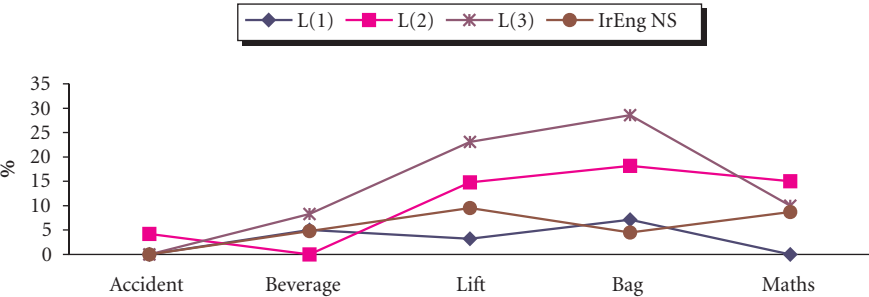


Figure A13–1. Frequency of “*Kein Problem*”/“No problem” as a Minimize by offer/refusal situation — Developmental focus.

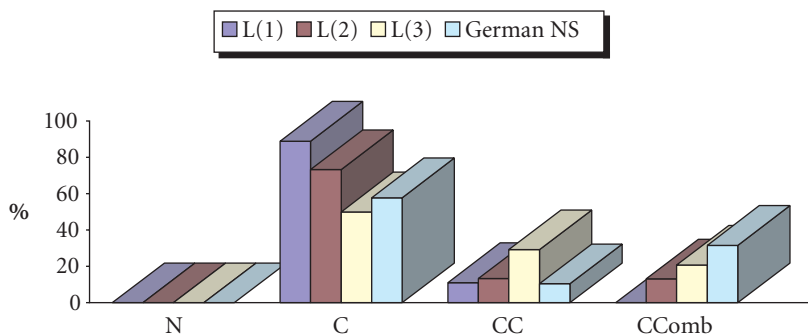


Figure A13-2. Frequency of syntactic downgrader types in work experience situation with conventionally indirect strategies — Developmental focus.

N: Negation; C: Conditional; CC: Conditional clause; CComb: Conditional combinations

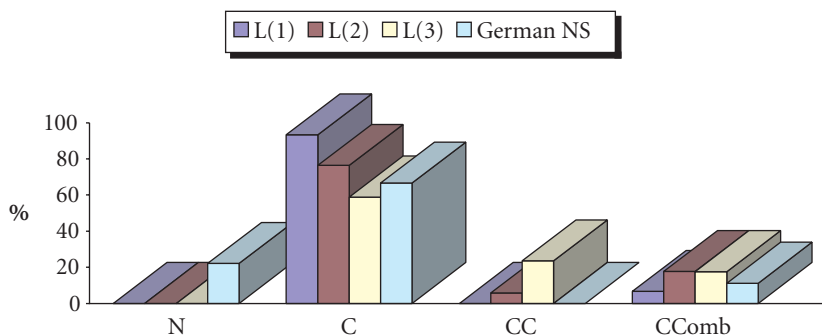


Figure A13-3. Frequency of syntactic downgrader types in lift situation with conventionally indirect strategies — Developmental focus.

N: Negation; C: Conditional; CC: Conditional clause; CComb: Conditional combinations

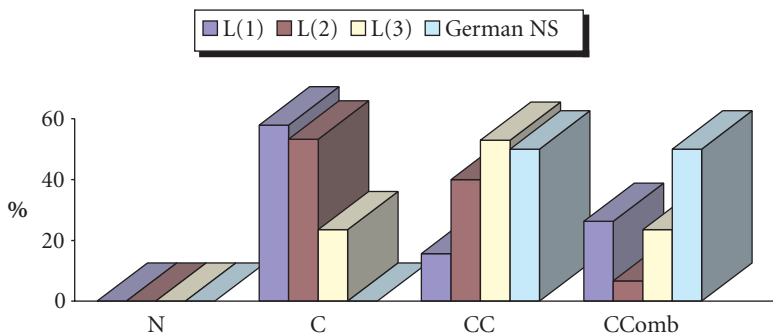


Figure A13-4. Frequency of syntactic downgrader types in maths situation with conventionally indirect strategies — Developmental focus.

N: Negation; C: Conditional; CC: Conditional clause; CComb: Conditional combinations

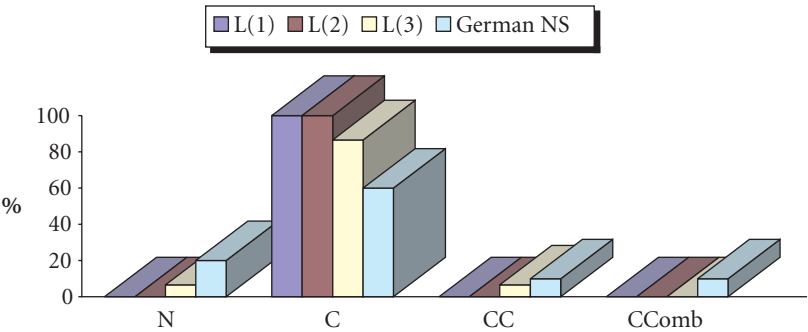


Figure A13-5. Frequency of syntactic downgrader types in beverage situation with conventionally indirect strategies — Developmental focus.

N: Negation; C: Conditional; CC: Conditional clause; CComb: Conditional combinations

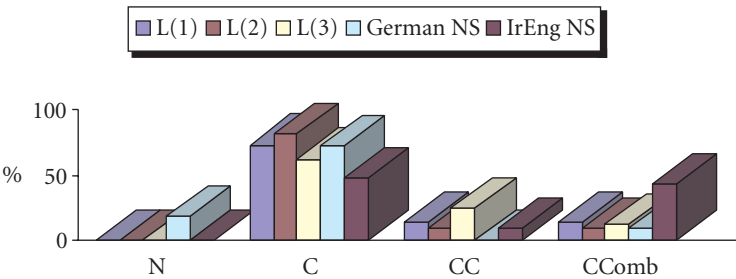


Figure A13-6. Frequency of syntactic downgrader types in notes situation with conventionally indirect strategies — Developmental focus.

N: Negation; C: Conditional; CC: Conditional clause; CComb: Conditional combinations

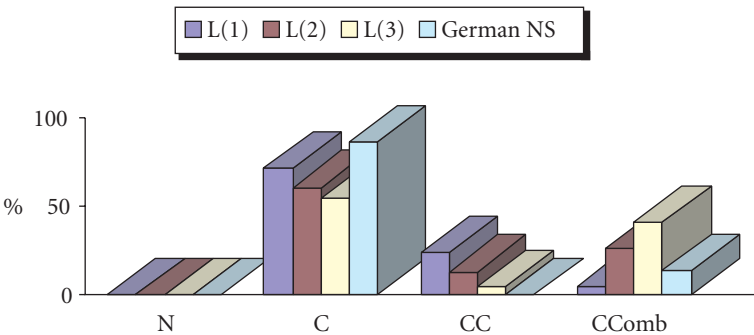


Figure A13-7. Frequency of syntactic downgrader types in drive situation with conventionally indirect strategies — Developmental focus.

N: Negation; C: Conditional; CC: Conditional clause; CComb: Conditional combinations

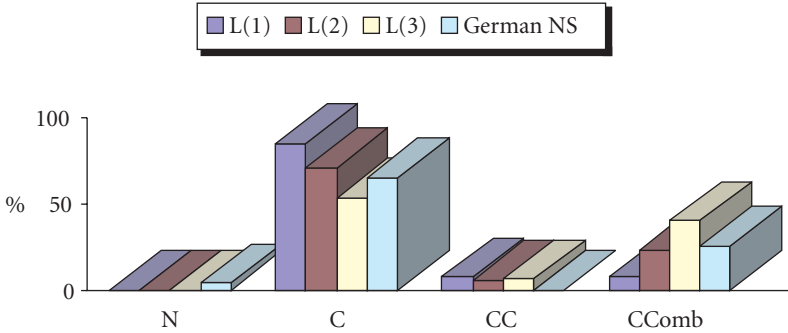


Figure A13-8. Frequency of syntactic downgrader types in presentation situation with conventionally indirect strategies — Developmental focus.

N: Negation; C: Conditional; CC: Conditional clause; CComb: Conditional combinations

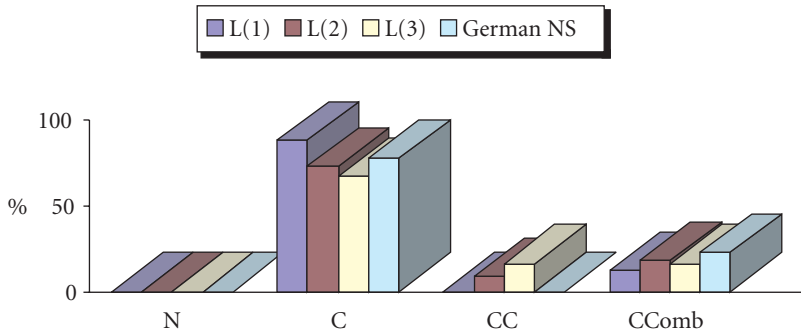


Figure A13-9. Frequency of syntactic downgrader types in grammar situation with conventionally indirect strategies — Developmental focus.

N: Negation; C: Conditional; CC: Conditional clause; CComb: Conditional combinations

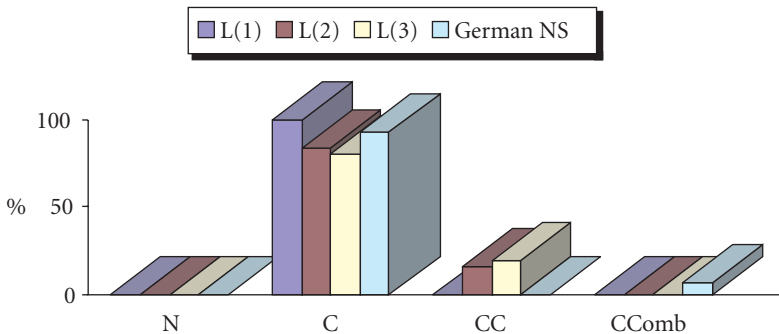


Figure A13-10. Frequency of syntactic downgrader types in telephone situation with conventionally indirect strategies — Developmental focus.

N: Negation; C: Conditional; CC: Conditional clause; CComb: Conditional combinations

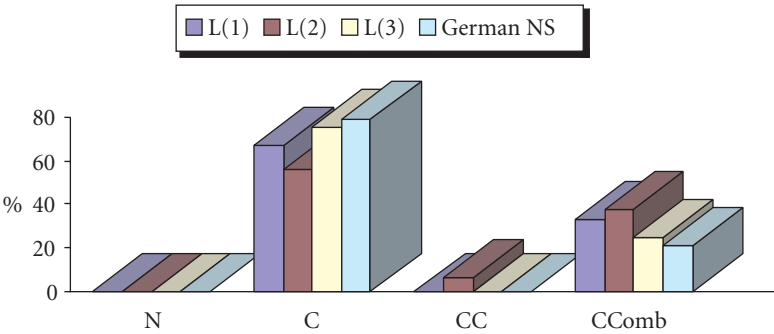


Figure A13–11. Frequency of syntactic downgrader types in application form situation with conventionally indirect strategies — Developmental focus.
N: Negation; C: Conditional; CC: Conditional clause; CComb: Conditional combinations

Appendix 14. Sample course module

Module: The Pragmatics of Native/Non-Native Speech

COURSE OUTLINE:

Topic	Readings
1. Introduction	
2. Pragmatics — an overview	*Parker/Riley (1994:11–36), *Linke et al. (1996: 170–95)
3. Cross-cultural/Interlanguage Pragmatics	*Blum-Kulka et al. (1989a & b), Thomas (1983), Wierzbicka (1985)
4. Research methods I	Beebe/Cummings (1996), *Kasper (1998a) or Kasper/Dahl (1991), Rintell/Mitchell (1989), Rose (1992), Sasaki (1998)
5. Research methods II	As above
6. “I wonder could you ...?” Native speaker requests	*Aijmer (1996: 124–87), Blum-Kulka/House (1989), Lüger (1993: 77–85)
7. “Could you lend me your notes, please? I wasn’t there and ..., and ...?” Interlanguage request productions	Blum-Kulka et al. (1989b), Edmondson/House (1991), *Faerch/Kasper (1989), House (1989a)
8. (a) “Would you like some? Sure?” (b) “We must meet up some time.”	<i>Offers</i> : *Aijmer (1996: 189–95), Hancher (1979), Wierzbicka (1985: 145–49) <i>Invitations</i> : Hancher (1979), *Wolfson et al. (1983)
9. “No, thanks!”	*Beebe et al. (1990), Chen et al. (1995), Kinjo (1987)
10. “I’m really sorry!”	Blum-Kulka et al. (1989b), Borkin/Reinhart (1978), Edmondson/House (1981: 153–57), *House (1989b), Olshtain/Cohen (1989)
11. “You look so nice! No, I’m ugly and wrinkled” Compliments/compliment responses	*Chen (1993), Herbert (1989), Wolfson (1981)
12. “Hi, how are you?”, ... “I have to head soon”: Openings and closings	Edmondson/House (1981: 188–91, 207–9), *Ferguson (1976), House (1982), Lüger (1993: 52–77)
13. “But I want to be me!”	Hinkel (1996), Kasper/Zhang (1995), *Littlewood (1983)
14. “Acquiring different strokes”: Acquisition of pragmatic competence	Bardovi-Harlig/Hartford (1996), *Kasper/Schmidt (1996), Marriott (1995), Olshtain/Blum-Kulka (1985)
15. Can pragmatic competence be taught?	House (1995), *Kasper (1997a), Olshtain/Cohen (1990), Tomalin/Stempleski (1993)
16. Project discussions	

Note: References with * are to be read by all students

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